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An exploration of the time-management behaviours of small-business owner-managers

Peter Michael McNamara
University of Wollongong

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Sydney Business School

**An exploration of the time-management
behaviours of small-business owner-managers**

Peter Michael McNamara

BA, Dip Ed, M Studs Ed, MBA

**This thesis is presented as part of the requirements for the award of the
Degree of Doctorate of Business Administration at the
University of Wollongong.**

June 2016

ABSTRACT

The ongoing success and growth of the Australian economy, like that of many world economies, largely depends on the contribution of small business. Whilst failure rates for small businesses are reportedly high in some industry sectors, the sheer hard work, motivation and entrepreneurship of small-business managers helps to ensure that there is more success than failure. Struggling with the pressure of impending deadlines, caused in part by today's highly accelerated work environment, small-business managers are in a constant battle with time. Small-business owner-managers, in particular, face the added burdens of keeping the business afloat, pursuing new opportunities and managing their employees. Studying the time-management behaviours of owner-managers is becoming even more important in this highly competitive, global and time-driven environment.

Time management is widely acknowledged, particularly in the populist literature, as a positive approach to improving productivity and work-life balance whilst also helping to reduce stress. It is said to do so through practices such as goal-setting, planning, prioritising and scheduling. The literature review in this study revealed that the value and benefits of time management, which are widely acknowledged, have not been supported by rigorous research. In particular, the gap in the literature that is most evident, and the subject of this research, is the application of time management in the context of small business. This study is therefore motivated by three research questions: (1) What are the planning, monitoring, executive and time-assessment behaviours of small-business owner-managers? (2) How do personal and environmental factors influence the time-management behaviours of small-business owner-managers? and (3) What are the productivity, work-life balance and stress-related consequences that result from the adoption of time-management behaviours by small-business owner-managers? To conduct this exploration, a case-study methodology was chosen that incorporated a series of semi-structured interviews, time logs and participant feedback from 10 small-business owner-managers (SBOMs).

The findings, which emerged during the course of this study, reinforce the significant role that time management plays in small-business management. The

study also showed that the way in which SBOMs manage their time is characterised by personalisation, flexibility, integration, informality and pragmatism. The influences that affect these behaviours include personal and environmental influences; together, they shape and influence the capacity of SBOMs to manage time effectively. To complete the exploration of behaviour, through the eyes of experienced SBOMs, three consequences of time-management behaviours are examined which include productivity, work-life balance and stress. Examining these consequences along with influences provides a more complete picture about the benefits and motivations of SBOMs and their adoption of time-management behaviours. The demands on the time of SBOMs, who lead and manage their small businesses, show no signs of slowing down, and this research may help to provide the basis for dealing with present and future time-management challenges within this context.

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Peter McNamara (June 2016)

Thesis certification

Certification

I, Peter M. McNamara declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Business Administration, in the Sydney Business School, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Peter M. McNamara

18 June 2016

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this research is to make a contribution to the knowledge and practice of time management within the context of Australian small business. Internationally, small business continues to attract the attention of researchers because of its significant impact on national economies in terms of wealth creation, employment and innovation (Carter & Jones-Evans, 2009, p. 97). Small-business owner-managers (SBOMs) play a critical role in the success or failure of small businesses as a sector (Allen & Langowitz, 2010). The perceived value and popularity of time management is, in part, due to its association with a positive impact on personal and organisational productivity (Adebisi, 2013; MacKenzie, 1997; McCay, 1959). Time management is also associated with improving one's overall well-being and reducing work-related pressures and stress (Macan, Shahani, Dipboye, & Phillips, 1990; Nordqvist, Hovmark, & Zika-Viktorsson, 2004).

The Australian economy, like many other world economies, largely depends on the small-business sector for survival and growth (Nelson, Brunetto, Farr-Wharton, & Ramsay, 2007; Newbert, 2015). In 2010-2011, small businesses in Australia accounted for almost one-half of private-sector industry employment and contributed approximately one third of private-sector industry value added (Department of Innovation Industry Science Research and Tertiary Education, 2012). The impact of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) has affected Australian small businesses, as it has many businesses throughout the world. Australian small businesses, however, have shown increased confidence since the GFC and there has been a move in the past few years to increase employee numbers in small businesses throughout Australia (Certified Practising Accountants Australia, 2012). Australian small businesses are reportedly improving their business-management practices in response to the current economic conditions, but the 2012 CPA Report (Certified Practising Accountants Australia, 2012) asserts that there is still considerable room for improvement.

SBOMs benefit from flexibility, the lack of bureaucracy, the ability to make quick decisions and the development of personal relationships with customers which are characteristics associated with small business (Anderson & Ullah, 2014). These benefits are balanced by the pressures brought to bear by unrelenting competition and intense customer demand in some sectors. SBOMs do not always have the resources at their disposal to meet these ongoing demands compared to medium-sized and larger businesses (Anderson & Ullah, 2014; Chittithaworn, Islam, Keawchana, & Yusuf, 2011). The broad range of strategic and operational activities that SBOMs may have to personally deal with is particularly demanding on their time, which is the most non-renewable resource of all.

A contemporary theme affecting small business, that is reflected in the literature, is the increased pace of work and the growing pressures brought to bear in the workplace (Trevan & Protocan, 2005). This contemporary phenomenon has been referred to as “harriedness” (Southerton, 2007, p. 113). The increasing dependence on technology such as mobile phones and tablets for work and general social networking has also been linked to the intensification of work and a general sense of being rushed by other employees (Bittman, Brown, & Wajcman, 2009). The *Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008 Time Usage Survey* acknowledges that Australians are “spending less time playing, sleeping and eating or drinking, but working longer” (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). The moves towards work-life balance, increasingly topical in the past two decades, have not proven to be successful in many organisations. Management’s actual take-up of innovative work-life initiatives is still relatively low (Spinks, 2004). In smaller businesses, this take-up is even more difficult for owner-managers, who have the added responsibility of keeping the business afloat and looking after the welfare of employees (O’Gorman, Bourke, & Murray, 2005).

1.2 THE NATURE OF SMALL BUSINESS

1.2.1 Small-business characteristics

Small businesses are set up for a variety of different reasons, responding to a broad range of customer needs and reflecting the individual goals and aspirations of their

owners and managers (Anderson & Ullah, 2014; Blackburn, Hart, & Wainwright, 2013). While entrepreneurial and growth activity is frequently associated with small business, SBOMs may sometimes be more concerned with survival than growth (Gray, 2002). Many firms struggle to survive in their early years, and a sizeable portion of them seem to die young (Cressy, 2006). This view has recently been challenged, in the Australian context, where it is reported that the exit rates of small businesses has slowed (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

Key characteristics that differentiate the small-business sector from larger businesses include limitations on knowledge, time and resources (Anderson & Ullah, 2014), reliance on a small number of customers and the need for multi-skilled employees (Forsman, 2008; Thomas & Barton, 2006). The resource constraints and complex working arrangements, characteristic of small businesses, result in greater demands on fewer employees and add to the pressure on managers (Gray, 2002; Smith & Zagelmeyer, 2010, p. 396). In addition, small businesses may not have the resources to provide employee development through training or mentoring (Thomas & Barton, 2006). On the positive side, this very lack of physical and human resources may help promote multi-skilling and resourcefulness.

Unlike larger businesses, small businesses characteristically operate with close control and hands on management (Anderson & Ullah, 2014) in which the owner-manager is responsible for making most of the major decisions (Pansiri & Temtime, 2008). When a business expands, the manager's responsibilities may reach the point of overload and even personal stress, creating the need for significant structural and role changes as well as the employment of new staff (Davidson, 2009). Business growth may also cause a SBOM to delegate more responsibilities to other employees which in turn frees up time that can be devoted to more strategic activity. This time left over after all the necessary business activities have been dealt with (Goodin, Rice, Bittman, & Saunders, 2005), which is referred to in this study as discretionary time, is discussed further in Section 2.4.1.

In many instances, small businesses are less formal than larger organisations, and owner-managers allow flexible working arrangements at their discretion (Maxwell, Rankine, Bell, & MacVicar, 2007). This flexibility and lack of formality potentially provide SBOMs with discretionary time, which may, if managed effectively, provide an SBOM with opportunities to focus on more value-adding activities for the business. It also enables a manager to respond directly to employee and customer needs as they arise.

1.2.2 Australian small business

Australian enterprises that employ between one and 19 employees are referred to in this thesis as small businesses (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015). Small businesses represent 96% of businesses in Australia, though 61% of these are self-employed people and many within this group work from home. The entry rate into small business increased from 11.2% in 2012-13 to 13.7% in 2013-14 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015). Of the Australian firms that started in 2011, approximately 50% were still operating in 2014 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

Businesses that grow beyond the size of micro businesses, i.e. those employing between one and four people, have a stronger survival rate than those remaining as micro businesses; these micro businesses include single-person businesses referred to as sole traders (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015). The Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR) reports that nearly 46% of small-business owners work more than 40 hours per week; 22% work 41-50 hours, 18% work 51-70 hours and 6% work over 70 hours per week (Department of Innovation Industry Science and Research, 2010).

This snapshot of Australian small business suggests that there is still a considerable volatility associated with the small-business sector despite its relatively positive recovery from the effects of the Global Financial Crisis. Better planning strategies not only are associated with small businesses' success (Wiesner & Millett, 2012), they are also critical foundations of time management.

The findings of this research may provide valuable insights into how small-business managers use time management as they achieve their business goals.

1.3 THE SMALL-BUSINESS OWNER-MANAGER (SBOM)

This research primarily focuses on the way that SBOMs manage their time whilst engaging in all the activities associated with the operation of a small business. Small-business managers frequently play a strongly influential role in the success of a business (Allen & Langowitz, 2010; Blackburn et al., 2013), regularly performing a multitude of tasks in pursuit of their business goals. O’Gorman, Burke and Murray (2005, p. 3) describe the work of a small-business manager as “chaotic, unstructured and unpredictable”. This interpretation may not be applicable to every business, but in essence, depending on the circumstances of the business, a small-business manager may have to respond to rapidly changing and uncertain work environments (Beaver & Jennings, 2005).

O’Gorman et al. (2005, p. 3), in their extensive observational study of small-business managers, concluded that managerial work in the context of small business is typically characterised by “brevity, fragmentation and variety”, and that much of the communication is informal. This variety is also one of the attractions of small business for some people. Floren (2006, p. 281), in his synthesis of five different observational studies, adds to this description the words “unplanned, informal and hectic” in regard to the kind of work that SBOMs do. Garengo et al. (2005) report that SBOMs often tend to focus on operational matters, which causes them to be time-poor.

The personal influences of the SBOM also play a large part in the success of a business and the way it is managed. This is further discussed in relation to influences affecting the time-management behaviours of SBOMs (Section 2.3). For example, research conducted by Allen and Langotwitz (2010) strongly suggests that business founders who have a proactive disposition have a positive impact on the growth of a business. Small-business managers also have the responsibility for the continued performance of a small business to ensure that it retains a competitive advantage within its industry and continues improving its competitive

position (McLarty, Pichanic, & Sropva, 2012). More entrepreneurial SBOMs have been described as having the following five characteristics: propensity for risk-taking, need for achievement, locus of control, over-optimism and a desire for autonomy (Carter & Jones-Evans, 2009). Gibb and Scott (1985) argue that, as well as strategic capability, the personal commitment of the owner contributes to goal achievement in firms.

SBOMs play a central role in the leadership and management of the business. An Australian study suggests that owner-managers tend to take a “disproportionate share of the responsibility for planning and strategic behaviour” (Woods & Joyce, 2003, p. 185). This lack of willingness to delegate results in some managers spending too much time on activities that other employees could potentially take on.

Finally, the goals of the SBOM also play an important role in the work done each day. Individual goals vary as much as the businesses themselves, but there are some common goals, such as the success or growth of the business, that need to be considered in examining time management. These goals will be examined in the literature review (Section 2.2.4.2.1).

1.4 TIME AND MANAGEMENT

Managing time has long been associated with the increase of both personal and organisational productivity through discipline and the informed prioritisation of goals (Drucker, 1967; MacKenzie, 1997; McCay, 1959). The reality, which has not escaped numerous authors on the subject, is that time itself is a universally complex phenomenon that is independent of management (Ates, Garengo, Cocca, & Bititci, 2013; Claessens, Eerde, Rutte, & Roe, 2007; Hellsten, 2012; Schwartz, 2007). Time management, although a flawed concept if interpreted literally, is a popular collective label for a range of management behaviours designed to improve overall effectiveness and well-being. In particular, time management emphasises the “effective use of time” towards the achievement of business-related goals (Claessens et al., 2007, p. 262).

Definitions of management and its functions are frequently attributed to Henri Fayol, whose seminal work, *General and Industrial Management*, was first translated from the original 1916 publication, *Industrial and General Administration*, in 1949 (Fayol, 1965). Fayol attributed five key functions to the management process: planning, organising, commanding, coordinating and controlling (Fayol, 1965). Contemporary management models reflect much of Fayol's original representation of key management elements. The terms "planning", "organising", "controlling" and "coordinating" are still in common usage, although "commanding" has been replaced by "leading" (Mariotti & Glackin, 2015).

Though more contemporary definitions about management include the management of human resources, technology, finances, processes, decision-making, and problem-solving (Shenhar & Renier, 1996), the managerial functions proposed by Fayol (1965) are still aligned favourably with time-management behaviours. The purpose of Hellsten's comprehensive review of the time-management literature was to "summarise the characteristics of time-management behaviours and skills and identified by empirical research, popular books, articles and multimedia on time management" (Hellsten, 2012, p. 5). The findings revealed that of the 96 studies relating to time management, 63% included planning, 47% included organising and 60% included scheduling. This highlights that time management, even in its terminology, fits into the general paradigm of management.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOPIC

Australia's small-businesses sector employs over 4.5 million people and produces over \$330 billion of Australia's economic output per year (Department of Finance, 2015). Anderson and Ullah (2014, p. 326) refer to small businesses as the "quintessential form of business." The small-business sector in Australia has been the subject of considerable interest in the past few years due to its significant impact on employment, wealth creation and economic prosperity (Department of Finance, 2015). This interest in the success of small businesses has been further

intensified by the softening of the resources boom in Australia as well as a downturn in manufacturing (Department of Finance, 2015).

While small businesses are variously described using such metaphors as the “the engine room of the Australian economy,” (Department of Finance, 2015), studies indicate that the small-business sector is notable for “high failure rates and poor performance levels” (Jocumsen, 2004, p. 659). Hiltrop (2005, p. 122) asserts that “good management fosters organisational success”. Much of the burden for the success of these small businesses rests squarely on the shoulders of SBOMs (Department of Finance, 2015).

Bergin-Seers and Jago (2007) assert that the motivations of the owner-manager, the structure of the business and available resources affect how a firm is managed. The multi-faceted nature of small-business management includes a broad range of roles, including that of strategic planner, entrepreneur, networker, customer-service provider and HR manager; the manager is thus constantly challenged by a lack of resources, especially time, and a propensity to be reactive (Anderson & Ullah, 2014; Lochmann & Steger, 2002). Most small businesses are time-poor (Walker, Redmond, Webster, & Le Clus, 2007). The consequences of poor management and poor use of time are also felt on a personal level, with work-life balance being weighted towards work (Parris, Vickers, & Wilkes, 2008).

1.6 GENERAL APPROACH TO THE RESEARCH

The literature review in Chapter 2 reveals that time management is “a largely unexplored area of research, containing many unresolved issues” (Claessens, Roe, & Rutte, 2009, p. 33). Many unresolved issues surround both the attempt to define time management and its application to varied organisational contexts. Time management is a complex phenomenon that is interconnected with SBOMs’ personal influences as well as the context of the work situation within which they operate.

Qualitative research is appropriate when dealing with a complex phenomenon (Stake, 2006). Time management, as the literature review reveals, is characterised

by complex processes and supported by interconnected skills and behaviours. The small-business context, within which this research is applied, is also diverse, multifaceted and reactive. The use of a case-study methodology, including semi-structured interviews, the completion of time logs and participant feedback, with a select set of small-business managers enabled a broad exploration of time management in the SBOM context.

A broad theoretical framework underpinning time management and its application in the small-business sector was required for this research. Macan et al. (1990) used the plethora of existing self-help and time-management training literature in the development of the Time-management Behaviour Scale (time-management behaviours), which focused on what are commonly referred to as the “mechanics of time management”; these include planning, organising and controlling. Claessens et al. (2007) approached time management from a much broader and more inclusive perspective in their comprehensive review of the time-management literature. They described time management in terms of three dimensions of behaviours: time-assessment behaviours, planning behaviours and monitoring behaviours. They have recently added a fourth dimension which they call executive behaviours (Claessens et al., 2009, p. 33). This exploratory research incorporates the broad approach taken by Claessens et al. (2007), which itself incorporates the “mechanics of time management” of Macan (1994) and further explores “time-assessment behaviours”; these are examined in detail in Section 2.2.4.

1.7 THESIS AIMS

This thesis aims to explore the time-management behaviours of small-business owner-managers in Australia. It will focus on the particular facets of time management that are integrated into SBOMs’ everyday work and management practices. The research will also seek to examine the personal and environmental influences that affect SBOMs’ time-management behaviours as well as consequences resulting from the adoption of these behaviours.

1.8 THESIS OUTLINE

Chapter 1: Introduction

Presents a background context of small business in Australia within which SBOMs operate. This chapter introduces “time” as a constant challenge for SBOMs to effectively manage their businesses.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Examines the literature about time management. It analyses literature pertaining to both the influences and consequences that time-management behaviours have for SBOMs. A gap in the literature is identified that forms the basis of the remainder of the study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Outlines the methodology which is based on the constructivist paradigm. It also outlines the case-study methodology which uses semi-structured interviews supported by feedback and documentation for the gathering of data.

Chapter 4: Data analysis

The 10 case studies, used in this research are analysed individually, and comparisons and cross-analysis are presented regarding SBOMs’ time-management behaviours, influences and consequences of those behaviours.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The discussion concentrates on the findings of the 10 interviews and looks at the SBOMs’ time-management behaviours, the influences that affected those behaviours and the consequences that resulted from their adoption.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The final chapter presents the study’s conclusions, reports on the limitations of the study, makes recommendations about the application of the findings and suggests further research opportunities.

1.9 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1 presents the contextual background of this study. The critical role that small business plays within the Australian economy, as a major contributor to job creation, innovation and growth, should not be underestimated. Small-business managers, who play a pivotal role in the success of small business, are the subject of this research. They typically work long hours in a highly competitive environment (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008), and take on themselves many of the responsibilities that in a larger organisation would be delegated.

In Australia, small businesses are defined as those employing between 5 and 19 people and reportedly have a high rate of failure. Small businesses act as a transition between micro and medium businesses (Department of Finance, 2015). It is argued that time-management behaviour, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 2, enables SBOMs to plan, prioritise and organise work more productively, which results in improved productivity, better work-life balance and a reduction in stress levels.

Time management has been a popular subject in various media including self-help publications, the internet and workplace training courses. It has attracted growing interest from researchers since the 1980s, yet little attention has been given to how SBOMs manage their time in the context of their work environment. The following chapters in this thesis build a case for a qualitative exploration into the time-management behaviours of SBOMs while taking into consideration the context within which time management is practised. Chapter 2, the literature review, begins this exploration by reviewing the time-management literature pertaining to both small businesses and SBOMs. It further analyses the influences that affect time-management behaviours and the consequences of these behaviours on SBOMs.

2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 OVERVIEW

The literature review examines a range of time-management themes and how these themes relate to SBOMs. The literature review is comprised of six sections. Following from this overview, Section 2.2 focuses on the development, definition and direction of time-management behaviour, classifying specific behaviours into four dimensions. Section 2.3 reviews the two principal influences that affect time-management behaviour: personal influences and environmental influences. Section 2.4 examines the consequences associated with SBOMs' adoption of time-management behaviours.

Section 2.5 synthesises the themes discussed in this chapter and points towards the gap in the literature that inspired this qualitative research. Section 2.6 presents the research questions that address this gap, with the view of adding a valuable contribution to the understanding of SBOMs' time-management behaviour in the context of small businesses.

2.2 TIME MANAGEMENT

2.2.1 Defining time management

Time management, a term coined in the late 1950s, still remains a largely unexplored area of management research (Bluedorn & Denhardt, 1988; Claessens et al., 2009). There is still no universally accepted and integrated definition of time management (Burt, Weststrate, Brown, & Champion, 2009; Claessens et al., 2007). The following definitions of time management in Table 2.1 demonstrate the breadth of issues and themes that researchers have sought to address.

Table 2.1: Definitions of time management

| Time-management elements | Definitions |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Goals and objectives | <p>“Effective use of time while performing certain goal directed activities” (Claessens et al., 2007, p. 262).</p> <p>“Time management is the use of time to achieve work and life goals” (Green & Skinner, 2005, p. 125).</p> <p>“Effective time management is considered important for managers for achieving the goals in an organization” (Ebrahimi, Hosseinzadeh, Tefreshi, & Hosseinzadeh, 2014; p. 193).</p> <p>“Effective time management has become increasingly important for managers as they seek to accomplish objectives in today’s organisations” (Arnold & Pulisch, 2004, p. 65).</p> |
| Priorities | <p>“The essence of time management is to set priorities and then to organise and execute around them. Setting priorities requires us to think carefully and clearly about values, about ultimate concerns. These then have to be translated into long- and short- term goals and plans translated once more into schedules or time slots. Then, unless something more important - not something more urgent - comes along, we must discipline ourselves to do as we planned” (Covey, 1991, p. 138).</p> |

| Time-management elements - cont. | Definitions |
|---|---|
| Productivity | <p>“Time management refers to activities that imply an effective use of time that is deemed to facilitate productivity and alleviate stress” (Nadinloyi, Hajloo, Garamaleki, & Sadeghi, 2013, p. 135).</p> <p>Time is related to output – increase your output and you will have more time (McCay, 1959, p. 19).</p> |
| Delegating | <p>“Getting results through the work of others for the benefit of the client” (Shenhar & Renier, 1996, p. 26).</p> |
| Work analysis | <p>“Time management is a process directed toward analysing work and the time it takes to complete various assignments” (Stanley, 2006, p. 13).</p> |
| Learnable behaviours | <p>“Conceptually, time management is a set of habits or learnable behaviours that may be acquired through increased knowledge, training, or deliberate practice. The authors further say: Time management is measured or conceptualized as a set of behaviours or habits rather than as a stable trait, and is therefore open to training and improvement” (MacCann, Fogarty, & Roberts, 2012, p. 619).</p> |
| Self-discipline | <p>“Self-discipline in pursuit of your goals” (MacKenzie, 1997, p. 23).</p> <p>“The self-controlled attempt to use time in a subjectively efficient way to achieve outcomes” (Koch & Kleinmann, 2002, p. 201).</p> |

2.2.2 The development and direction of time management

Understanding the emergence of time management as a discipline in its own right provides a link to contemporary interpretations of time management. The term “time management” first came to prominence in the post-war 1950s with the appropriately titled *The Management of Time* (McCay, 1959). McCay’s first chapter, “The pressure of time,” highlights the growing need within business organisations to achieve more, in less and less time (McCay, 1959). McCay also addressed issues such as increasing productivity, daily planning and the awareness of the consequences of poor time management on personal stress and work-life balance.

Drucker (1967) also acknowledged the importance of managers’ time as being a critical factor for the success of executives. In *The Effective Executive*, a chapter titled “Know thy time,” warns of the dangers of wasting time and the consequences of always being busy (Drucker, 1967). Improving one’s “time management” in the 1960s and 1970s was regarded as a practice solely for managers and not for employees. The business world at that time regarded the manager as the one who made decisions about how employees should best use their time.

The determination of an individual manager’s needs and the incorporation of a manager’s goals were also included in the discussion of time management in the 1970s (Lakein, 1973). The workplace was regarded as the primary context in which time-management practices were undertaken. Alec MacKenzie’s *The Time Trap* consolidated much of the thinking and practices about time management in the 1970s. While he addressed the issues commonly associated with time management, such as the setting of goals, objectives and priorities, he also went further to include a range of personal and contextual issues that influence time management, such as poor communication, meetings, procrastination and delegation (MacKenzie, 1997).

A broader interpretation of time-management research in the 1980s incorporated a range of psychological factors as well as thoughts on “cause and effect” surrounding the impact of time management in the workplace. King, Winett and Lovett (1986, p. 57) viewed time management as “coping behaviour in at risk

populations.” In their evaluation of working women from dual-earner families, they reported that women who received time-management instruction reported “significant increases in targeted stress reducing activities” (p. 57). Time management from the 1980s onward has been the subject of much more intense and empirical research, and has broadened its scope to include factors such as productivity, work-life balance and stress.

Time management differentiates itself from the general study of management (Section 1.4), by its emphasis on practical skills and disciplined behaviours that lead to the achievement of goals (Koch & Kleinmann, 2002, p. 201). Whereas, planning and organising are frequently considered in the context of the whole organisation, time management focuses on more individual behaviours such as personal goal setting, self-planning and organising (Claessens et al., 2007; Macan, 1996). The outcomes of such time-management behaviours include personal productivity, reducing stress (Nadinloyi et al., 2013) and improved work-life balance (these are discussed further in Section 2.4). In the small-business context, the closeness of the manager’s aspirations and goals to that of their business, which has been noted by researchers (Andersson & Tell, 2009; de Lema & Duréndez, 2007), may further blur the lines between time management and general management. The results of this research (this is discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6) shed some light on how SBOMs interpret, practise and individualise time-management behaviours to fit in with the particular demands of their environment and their personal preferences.

2.2.3 Time-management research

Time-management research has been strongly influenced by the attention given to its measurement and effectiveness (Macan, 1994). The lack of a universally accepted definition, (Section 2.2.1), combined with the continued growth in understanding of the impact of time management, has led to the development of a range of time-management instruments, questionnaires and scales that seek to understand the dimensions of time management and its applicability in particular contexts.

Some of the notable instruments developed to measure various outcomes of time management include the Time Structure Questionnaire (Bond & Feather, 1988) and the Time-management Questionnaire (Britton & Tesser, 1991). Bond and Feather's (1998) study used three samples of introductory psychology students totalling 746 students. Britton and Tesser (1991) conducted a longitudinal study involving 91 students whose time-management practices were monitored over a four year period while at University. The results of the use of these instruments found positive relationships between time-management practices and beneficial personal outcomes such as productivity and well-being, though only representative of college students in an educational environment. The Time-Management Behaviour Scale (TMBS) also emerged during the latter part of this period as a both a definition and a measure of time-management behaviours (Macan et al., 1990). Again, college students were the subjects of the initial testing of the time-management behaviours.

Macan's (1994) Time-Management Behaviour Scale, which has been revised several times from its original design in 1990, has since gone on to be more widely used in time-management research, particularly in the workplace context, than either the Time Structure Questionnaire or the Time Management Questionnaire. The Time-Management Behaviour Scale is strongly supported in the literature (Claessens et al., 2007). Peeters & Rutte's (2005) study of elementary school teachers and the Griffiths' (2003) study of central office employees are examples (Claessens et al., 2007, p. 259). It has been applied to a number of different organisational and personal situations. For example, Macan's (1994) research has been used by Kearns and Gardiner (2007) to understand the effect of time-management behaviours on training and performance, and by Green and Skinner (2005) to analyse time culture, stress and work and home balance. Jex and Elacqua (1999) also used Macan's time-management behaviour inventory in their study of high-priority tasks and satisfaction.

Testing of time-management instruments on student populations (Bond & Feather, 1988; Britton & Tesser, 1991; Macan et al., 1990), although convenient, does not

provide adequate meaning and understanding in other “real workplace” organisational contexts such as that of SBOMs. Claessens et al. (2007) observe that 23 of the 35 major time-management studies used student populations for their samples. Several of the studies focused on small-business employees, such as the Barling et al. (1996) study of car sales people, but none of these studies focused specifically on time-management behaviours of small-business managers.

More recently, the Time-management Environment Scale has been developed (Burt et al., 2009, p. 649). This instrument is based on an integrated model of time management using a scale that measures organisational variables “which would facilitate and support time-management practices.” Their study also takes up a challenge posed by Claessens et al. (2007) that current time-management research should include environmental influences.

2.2.4 Time-management behaviours

This study focuses on the time-management behaviours of SBOMs. While a range of broad definitions of time-management behaviours have been presented (Section 2.2.1), a more detailed review of time-management behaviours is necessary to address the complexities and contextual considerations that this study seeks to explore. Such an approach creates a solid platform with which to further analyse the influences that affect the time-management behaviours of SBOMs.

A comprehensive review of the time-management literature was conducted by Claessens et al. (2007) who concluded that three main dimensions of time-management behaviours were evident in the literature: time-assessment behaviour, planning behaviour and monitoring behaviour. Subsequent research by Claessens et al. (2009) saw the addition of a fourth dimension which they called executive behaviours. Macan’s (1994) process model of time-management behaviour included 1) setting goals and priorities; 2) the mechanics of time-management behaviour; and 3) a preference for organisation. The decision to use Claessens et al.’s (2009) four-dimensions of time-management behaviour, was based on the need to use a broad framework appropriate for the exploratory

nature of this study. Claessens et al. (2007) incorporated much of Macan's model of time-management behaviours into their review under the dimension of "planning behaviours". Claessens model, while incorporating elements of well-founded models such as those of Macan (1994), Bond and Feather (1988) and Britton and Tessar (1991), also adds the dimensions of "time-assessment behaviours" and "executive behaviours" which adds to the whole scope and complexity of this exploration in the context within which SBOMs operate.

Figure 2.1 is a diagrammatic representation of the Claessens et al. (2009) model and the sub-sections that form the basis of the first part of the literature review:

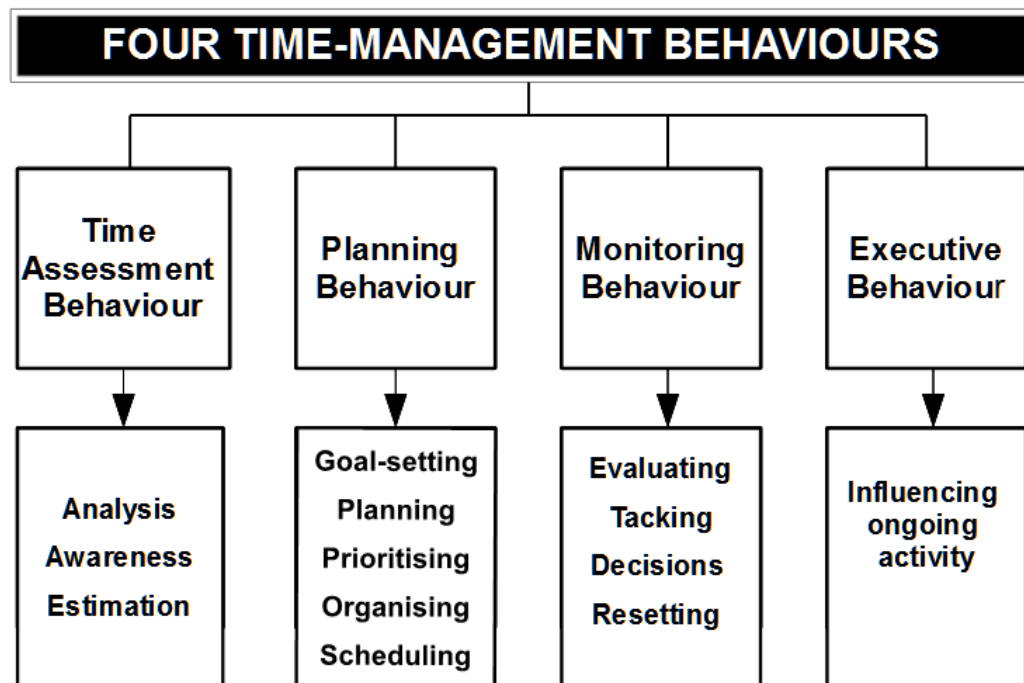


Figure 2.1: A model of the four time-management behaviours adapted from Claessens et al. (2009)

The literature review concentrates on the four dimensions of time-management behaviours. Planning behaviours are presented first, as they appear most frequently in the literature. Monitoring behaviours, which depend on planning behaviours, are then presented, followed by executive behaviours and time-assessment behaviours.

2.2.4.1 Planning behaviours

Planning behaviours aim at the achievement of goals through the effective use of time by grouping work-related activities according to priorities and anticipated time deadlines (Eilam & Aharon, 2003). Planning, in the context of small business, is about preparing for the challenges and opportunities that present themselves while continuing on a pathway towards future success (Cordeiro, 2013). Planning is frequently cited as a necessary and critical component of successful time-management behaviour (Claessens et al., 2007; Francis-Smythe & Robertson, 1999; Hellsten, 2012; Macan et al., 1990). Particular emphasis on elements of planning, such as personal organisation and prioritisation, are common themes in the popular self-help literature (Allen, 2003; Covey, Merrill, & Merrill, 1994; Dodd & Sundheim, 2005; MacKenzie, 1997; McCay, 1959).

Firms that actively engage in formal planning are in the minority (Richbell, Watts, & Wardle, 2006). Small businesses often struggle with planning due to the enormous strain placed on limited and sometimes overworked people and financial resources (Alasadi & Abdelrahim, 2008; Cordeiro, 2013; Gibson & Cassar, 2002). An irony, particularly for SBOMs who struggle with time, is that the lack of planning is often associated with a lack of time, whereas planning is designed to save time, thus creating time opportunity for other priorities. A range of studies also highlights that strategy and formal planning are non-existent in most small businesses (Beaver, 2007; Hormozi, Sutton, McMinn, & Lucio, 2002; Stonehouse & Pemberton, 2002). Small businesses tend to focus more on internal and short-term planning and less on longer term planning (Ates et al., 2013).

Planning is the conduit between goals and the actions required to achieve them, and necessitates prioritising and organising. These time-management behaviours depend on each other, and their occurrence is often simultaneous.

2.2.4.2 *Planning-related behaviours*

2.2.4.2.1 Goal-setting behaviours

Studies have linked goal-setting in the form of business plans with higher reported success rates in business (Sterling & Stubblefield, 1994). Setting personal and business goals is associated with productivity, which may provide a rationale for the adoption of time-management behaviours (Adebisi, 2013). SBOMs set goals to achieve personal and business outcomes. When goals are clearly defined, they become standards of performance and personal satisfaction (Locke & Latham, 2006). The achievement of goals, in a business context, is invariably accompanied by time boundaries and deadlines. A succinct definition of time management that encompasses these themes is: “effective use of time while performing certain goal directed activities” (Claessens et al., 2007, p. 24). Goals become the ultimate measure by which time-management effectiveness is measured; “self-control” is a requisite for the achievement of these goals (Koch & Kleinmann, 2002, p. 201).

Setting goals poses a number of challenges for an SBOM, as the owner/manager’s time constraints, lack of planning intensity and lack of power vis-à-vis the environment make small businesses much more reactive entities than larger businesses (Tocher & Rutherford, 2009). This is balanced to some extent by a manager’s need to be flexible and take advantage of new opportunities and changing circumstances as they arise (Beaver & Jennings, 2005). Goal achievement also has a significant impact on strategy and the achievement of planned activity, as well as on the completion of multiple tasks (Strickland & Galimba, 2001).

On a more operational level, the literature abounds with processes and methodologies for setting goals and objectives. A popular model is the S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-related) methodology, which is attributed to Doran (1981). The S.M.A.R.T. model, which Doran himself noted, is not applicable to every situation, was designed to help managers systematise their approach to goal setting and to keep them focused on realising the outcome of their objectives (Doran, 1981). This model has been criticised for being too static and not taking into consideration the changing circumstances and obstacles that

present themselves throughout the goal setting time period (Koltrin, 2013). The small-business environment may require small-business managers to react quickly to changing circumstances and opportunities, which may bring into question the value of formalising SMART goals and objectives (this was discussed in Section, 1.3).

2.2.4.2.2 Prioritising behaviours

Goals that managers set are refined into actionable activities or periods of activity through the process of prioritisation. Prioritisation can be regarded as a process of negotiation that includes key stakeholders (Botta & Bahill, 2007). Typically, an SBOM's day is a mixture of competing priorities where impending deadlines, people issues and financial considerations all battle for attention (Botta & Bahill, 2007). The term time-discounting refers to inter-temporal choices where the benefits of one priority achieved in less time outweighs the benefits associated with a later achievement of that same choice (Frederick, Loewenstein, & O'Donoghue, 2002). It is deadlines that make prioritisation a time-management issue. Prioritising is also regarded as a decision-making process where the relative merits of various options are weighed and stakeholders and customers are considered to ensure continuous progression (Henriksen & Røstad, 2010).

It is not unusual for small-business managers to simultaneously juggle long and short-term priorities (Gordon & Borkan, 2014). The day-to-day urgency involved in keeping a business running requires a small-business manager to opt for highly urgent priorities, which may result in other, longer-term priorities being temporarily postponed (Jennings & Beaver, 1997). SBOMs are often physically not able to manage all aspects of the business, and time-consuming critical issues often take precedence over less critical concerns (Jawahar & McLaughlin, 2001). These competing priorities include financial issues, customer business processes and the development of employees (Henriksen & Røstad, 2010).

The relative importance of prioritising was highlighted by Covey et al. (1994) whose Urgent Vs Important Matrix compares “urgency”, which is a time-deadline issue, with “priority”, which is a rating about importance. This matrix, also known

as the Eisenhower Matrix, is referred to in a broad range of self-help time-management books, textbooks, web pages and articles (Cole, 2013; Covey et al., 1994; Krogue, 2013; McKay & McKay, 2013; Pausch, 2008). For SBOMs, the intersection of time urgency and priorities can provide a snapshot of one's time management, especially in relation to competing priorities (Gordon & Borkan, 2014).

2.2.4.2.3 Organising and scheduling behaviours

Of all the planning behaviours associated with time management, organising and scheduling are pre-eminent. Hellsten (2010) refers to 46 studies in which organisation and scheduling skills are linked to time-management behaviour. Because of the close connection between organising and scheduling, these two planning behaviours are dealt with together in this section.

Organising, in the context of time management, is commonly associated with grouping activities in order of priority and importance (Moran, 2011). Organising is described as the process of assigning tasks, allocating resources and arranging and coordinating the activities of both individuals and groups with the purpose of implementing plans (Campling, Poole, Wiesner, & Schermerhorn, 2006). In regard to time management, organising has been referred to as a personal preference, and includes such activities as maintaining a tidy workspace, sorting mail, filing paperwork and setting out tasks based on preference (Macan, 1994). Organising enables the tasks at hand to be dealt with in a logical and systematic order (Schmerling, 1996). Organising ensures that the resources, including time, are sufficient to implement plans in a logical and systematic order (Cole, 2013).

Organisational skills have been linked with increased productivity and time-saving (Lakein, 1973; MacKenzie, 1997; McCay, 1959). Although keeping a tidy desk and putting work-related activities in order are commonly aligned with the perception of being organised (Macan, 1994), this is not always the case. Lakein, (1973), for example, advises against over-organising or organising for organisation's sake, which he considers to be a time waster. However, the lack of organisation in one's

work is also linked with negative consequences such as stress and somatic tensions (McCay, 1959).

Whereas organising is concerned with preparation and systematically putting work activities in order, scheduling is about consciously and formally adding the time dimension to such activities and constructing some form of timetable for their completion (Burke & McAteer, 2007). Scheduling, as mentioned above, is often used in conjunction with organising behaviour, and is fundamentally concerned with the commitment to time boundaries of planned and organised events (Chu & Choi, 2005). For the SBOM, scheduling is a proactive behaviour whereby the manager, for instance, makes a commitment to being involved in work activity in future time periods. Possibly the most recognisable of the scheduling behaviours, which is also prolific in popular time-management literature (Covey et al., 1994; Lakein, 1973; MacKenzie, 1997) is the to-do list. The to-do list is based on the assumption that writing down a list of work-related activities, in some kind of order of priority, within certain time frames will help in the organisation and achievement of those activities (MacKenzie, 1997). It is also perhaps the most identifiable of all time-management behaviours.

Organising and scheduling, which have been the fundamental tenants of time-management behaviour since its inception (McCay, 1959), are able to be conducted more sophisticatedly today with the help of technology, but still remain pivotal to the notion of time management. How small-business managers utilise these behaviours and skills, is addressed in Chapter 4 of this study.

2.2.4.3 *Monitoring Behaviours*

Cole (2013, pp. 22-23) wrote of monitoring: "Keeping tabs on things by watching critical control points and sensitive spots alerts us to potential problems so we can take corrective action in plenty of time." Monitoring has been regarded as a key managerial role from the time of Fayol to the present day (Fells, 2000; O'Gorman et al., 2005). In relation to time management, the purpose of monitoring behaviours is to observe one's use of time while engaged in work activities, and then to take appropriate actions to ensure that time deadlines are met (Claessens et al., 2009).

Monitoring, in respect to time management, also enables the SBOM to make decisions about continuing the plans and priorities made earlier. In the context of small business, these decisions often rest solely with the owner-manager (McMahon, 2007; Pansiri & Temtime, 2008). Formal scheduling, through the use of electronic diaries or calendars, provides an up-to-date mechanism by which monitoring can take place (Claessens et al., 2009). If these monitoring mechanisms are shared throughout a small business, employees and stakeholders may also make judgements about the achievement of the planned activities (Blanford & Green, 2001). Technology has caused a blurring of the lines between traditional planning and monitoring behaviours: the same tools used for planning (e.g. an electronic calendar) also remind the user about impending deadlines or major events. Even the written to-do list, a scheduling activity, has been replicated by electronic forms, linked to calendars, which enable close monitoring and tracking of time (Bellotti, Dalal, Good, Flynn, & Bobrow, 2004).

Technology plays an ever more important role in both time management and project management with respect to monitoring. Technology, however, may also be responsible for the creation of endless interruptions (Epper & Fehr-Duda, 2012) that may affect the ability to monitor time effectively. Schwartz (2007) contends that interruptions and distractions are costly and can increase the time necessary to complete priority tasks by 25%. How SBOMs use technology effectively is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Project management is also an area in which the monitoring of time is a critical component. Project management incorporates planning, milestones, and schedules, and addresses risk factors that affect delivery times (Linetsky, 2008). Project management enables managers to monitor and control projects, though little research has focused on project management in small businesses (Turner, Ledwith, & Kelly, 2009). Project management and time management are interconnected, as a project is a planned activity that is time-bound (Wu et al., 2013). Evidence also suggests that, in small businesses, there are difficulties associated with the monitoring of projects due to limited resources and the lack of

adequate systems and processes that may be more available in larger organisations (Owens, 2007).

Monitoring one's own time usage against planned activity is ultimately a matter of self-regulation (Claessens et al., 2009), and may depend on a person's goals and approach to completing tasks (Oettingen, Kappes, Guttentberg, & Gollwitzer, 2015). Though technology has significantly improved the means by which time-related activities can be monitored in real time, the need to monitor remains as an ongoing decision for the SBOM.

2.2.4.4 *Executive time-management behaviours*

Claessens et al. (2009) suggested another form of time-management behaviours which they called executive behaviours. These are the kind of behaviours where managers, for example, take a range of proactive and tactical measures to ensure that their time schedule stays on track (Claessens et al., 2009). Examples of proactive time-management behaviours are cited, such as running better meetings, overcoming delay behaviour, self-regulating in adhering to goal achievement and generally avoiding time-wasters (Claessens et al., 2009). These suggested behaviours ultimately enable the achievement of goals. These proactive behaviours are designed to encourage a person to stop wasting time, and are also the subject of numerous self-help and management textbooks alike (Cole, 2013; Lakein, 1973; MacKenzie, 1997). One proactive time-management behaviour, which fits under this general definition, and which is also a popular subject in the self-help time-management literature, is delegation.

Delegation is commonly cited in the literature as having a positive influence on management including time-management behaviours (Banford, Buckley, & Roberts, 2014; Lakein, 1973; Woodhull, 1997). It is described as a process, a practice, a behaviour and an action (Eales-White, 2005; Yukl & Ping Ping, 1999). Yukl and Ping (1999) describe delegation as empowering decision procedure that gives an individual or group the authority to make decisions formerly made by the leader. Delegation is about handing over responsibility and authority to

subordinates as well as giving them a certain amount of autonomy and control over decision-making (Yukl & Ping Ping, 1999).

This giving of authority or empowerment has the potential to free up an SBOM's time, creating discretionary time (Drucker, 1967; Kamal & Raza, 2011). Discretionary time then enables an SBOM to focus on higher-value activity such as developing new business opportunities and dealing with important customers. Discretionary time itself needs to be managed carefully to prevent other non-value-adding activities filling up the gaps.

In reality, when a business grows, there may be no option for SBOMs other than to delegate; otherwise they will be constantly involved in the detail that accompanies operational issues (Jennings & Beaver, 1997; Pech, 2009). Even if an SBOM adopts a range of time-management behaviours such as planning and organising, time can still be a challenge, as one person is not capable of doing everything that it takes to both run a business and enable it to grow (Beaver & Jennings, 2005; Gilmore, Carson, & O'Donnell, 2004).

An added benefit of delegation argued by Pech (2009), is that delegation develops confidence in employees, and helps them to advance their own careers. The manager is also able to focus on more strategic issues as a result of delegation (Pech, 2009; Yukl & Ping Ping, 1999). In the context of the SBOM, the need to delegate is bound up with a range of needs and expectations such as SBOMs' willingness to shed some responsibilities and their trust in employees to carry out the delegated duties (Pech, 2009; Yukl & Ping Ping, 1999). Gomezelj and Antončič (2008) point out that SBOMs are often in charge of the organisation's knowledge, and their perception may be that handing this knowledge over is fraught with risk.

2.2.4.5 Time-assessment behaviour

Time-assessment behaviours, aim at awareness of here and now, or past, present and future, and at self-awareness of one's time use (Claessens et al., 2009). This helps managers accept tasks and responsibilities that fit within the limit of their capabilities. Time-assessment behaviour differs from the other time-management

behaviours in that it is the least tangible in terms of the relationship between action and consequence. Time assessment is also referred to as “time analysis” and “time estimation” (Hellsten, 2012, p. 8). By using accurate time assessment, managers can better understand events and more accurately forecast future time-consuming events (Whipp, Adam, & Sabelis, 2002). Time-assessment behaviour is a prerequisite to planning (Claessens et al., 2009); it also assists in monitoring and executive behaviours.

Research has also found that people underestimate the time required to complete tasks (Buehler, Griffin, & Ross, 1994), which places their time assessment out of kilter with the real amount of time required. The underestimation, referred to as the planning fallacy (Forsyth & Burt, 2008), may compromise time assessment. Buehler et al. (1994) also found that people did not reflect on their own experience when making decisions about their future use of time, which may be due to an overly optimistic desire to complete a future task.

On a more practical level, a tool that has long been associated with both time assessment and monitoring, is the time log (Macan, 1994; MacKenzie, 1997). Time logs are used in time-management studies to measure the actual time that work-related activities take (Claessens et al., 2007; Slaven & Totterdell, 1993). Time logs also address the concerns of Buehler et al. (1994) about the ways people underestimate the expected time it takes to complete tasks.

For the SBOM, being able to accurately assess the time it takes to perform certain tasks, is invaluable for planning, organising and scheduling (Fitzgerald & Waldrip, 2004; Smith, 2002). Accurate time analysis may also provide a basis for decisions about delegation, procrastination and polychronicity (these are discussed further in Section 2.3.1).

2.2.5 Summary of time-management behaviours

Time-management behaviours have attracted very little empirical research, and much is still unknown about them (Claessens et al., 2009). Considerable interest has resulted from the perception that time can somehow be controlled or

managed, resulting in improved productivity or well-being (Oettingen et al., 2015). The literature review has presented time-management behaviour as a series of different, and interrelated, activities driven by the need for an SBOM to achieve long-term and short-term goals. The achievement of these goals is supported by planning, prioritising, organising, scheduling and monitoring. How SBOMs integrate time management into their managerial practice, as a whole or in parts, is at the heart of this study.

2.3 INFLUENCES AFFECTING TIME-MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOUR

A review of the literature revealed two categories of influences affecting SBOMs' time-management behaviour: personal and environmental influences. The literature pertaining to each of these influences is discussed below.

2.3.1 Personal influences affecting SBOMs' time-management behaviours

Recent qualitative studies have shown a link between owner characteristics such as "business style", and business growth (Blackburn et al., 2013). In particular, the owner's business intentions or aspirations are a significant factor in a small business's success and growth (Brownhilder & Vanzyl, 2014; Morrison, Breen, & Ali, 2003), as is the SBOM's need for personal accomplishment (Surdez, Aguilar, Sandoval, & Lamoyi, 2012).

Figure 2.2 represents the personal influences that researchers have found to affect time-management behaviours. Section 2.3.1.1 deals with a range of personal influences relating to a SBOM's personality or personal approach to managing a small business; these include personality traits, procrastination, polychronicity, monochronicity and time-discounting.

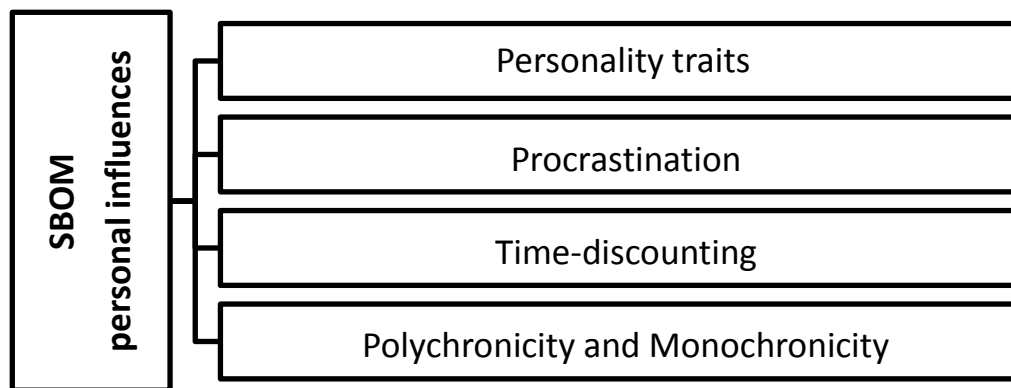


Figure 2.2: Personal influences affecting SBOMs' time-management behaviours

2.3.1.1 Personality traits

Evidence is emerging that links “personality” traits with time-management behaviour. Small businesses have been described as “as an extension of the owner’s personality” (Beaver & Jennings, 2005, p. 11). Time management plays an important role in the management style of an SBOM and this style influences how the whole business operates. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), a widely used personality-profiling instrument, uses an eight-dimension scale to classify personality types. The “J” and “P” scales indicate the extent to which a person plans and organises their activities (with “J” indicating a greater inclination toward planning, and “P” a greater inclination toward spontaneity and flexibility). These profiles indicate that a certain percentage of the population are naturally aligned with the time-management behaviours of planning and organising (Briggs-Myers, 1998). It has also been advanced that “judging managers behave in a highly planned, conscientious and methodological manner” (Gardner & Martinko, 1996, p. 75).

Other research suggests a strong relationship between “Type A” personalities and a constant sense of urgency: Type A people seem to be in a constant struggle against the clock. Often, they quickly become impatient with delays and unproductive time, schedule commitments too tightly and try to do more than one

thing at a time, such as reading while eating or watching television (McLeod, 2014). People displaying Type A behaviour patterns, exhibit a strong sense of “time urgency” (Dishon-Berkovits & Koslowsky, 2002, p. 723).

Emerging time-management research goes as far as suggesting that an individual’s propensity towards time management is a personality trait or a natural disposition (Claessens et al., 2007). Time-management behaviours are also linked to motivation in regard to time-management decisions and a manager’s perceived control over time (Frederick et al., 2002; Schmidt & DeShon, 2007; Schmidt, Dolis, & Tolli, 2009). Francis-Smythe and Robertson (1999, p. 273) introduced a five-scale factor of “time personality”, including punctuality, polychronicity, planning and impatience. They found that people who needed to exert higher levels of control in the work environment also scored highly on their scale as effective time managers.

2.3.1.2 Procrastination

Procrastination is described as avoidance behaviour that affects the completion of intended actions (Van Eerde, 2003). It has also been described as a “complex phenomenon” that goes beyond the issues relating to time management (Ferrari, Doroszko, & Joseph, 2005, p. 141). Tracey (2013) suggests that highly productive people procrastinate on low-value activities, whereas less-productive people procrastinate on activities that have a high personal and organisational value. For the SBOM, an example of a lower-value activity could be responding to time-consuming and distracting unsolicited emails (Jack, 2013), whereas a higher-value activity could be putting the necessary time aside to meet a customer’s deadline (Temtime & Pansiri, 2004). Not attending to higher-value activities may have a negative impact on the whole business (Section 2.3.2.2).

Procrastination is also associated with indecision, which in turn leads to delays in dealing with tasks; this behaviour may repeat itself over time (Chu & Choi, 2005; Knaus, 2000). Indecision also impacts the other employees of a small business. Knaus (2000, p. 155) contends, “At the extreme, procrastination represents a highly change-resistant, persistent, emotionally distressing, problem habit.” Such

habits or patterns of behaviour, such as procrastination, need to be avoided if they have negative consequences (Chu & Choi, 2005; König & Kleinmann, 2005). Bond and Feather (1988) report that traditional procrastinators, who are less structured in their time use, may drift aimlessly from one activity to another. Some evidence suggests that procrastinators display fewer time-management behaviours than non-procrastinators (Lay & Schouwenburg, 1993).

Procrastination is also aligned with conscientiousness which is one of the “Big Five” personality traits (Schouwenburg, 2004, p. 5). Whether procrastination is a behaviour that can be modified or a trait that is part of the manager’s makeup is a matter of interpretation (Schouwenburg, 2004). Procrastination is also associated with stress (Chu & Choi, 2005), and intentionally putting off an activity that should be done has significant ramifications for the time manager (Section 2.3.1). The tendency to procrastinate puts added stress on the planning and organisational processes associated with time management.

On the other hand, Chu and Choi (2005) assert that procrastination behaviours may not necessarily be dysfunctional and may have positive consequences. They distinguish between “passive procrastinators”, who they see as traditional procrastinators, and “active procrastinators”, who procrastinate for positive reasons (Chu & Choi, 2005, p. 235). The positive procrastinators enjoy the challenge of being under pressure and meeting tight deadlines, and they consciously plan their time closer to the due date. This phenomenon, also called “deadline rush” (König & Kleinmann, 2005), can motivate people to action. There is also support for the view that procrastination is a habit that can be overcome, at least in part, by the use of traditional time-management skills such as organising and scheduling (Leftwich, 2006).

2.3.1.3 Time-discounting

Time-discounting is also referred to as temporal discounting and discounted utility (Frederick et al., 2002; König & Kleinmann, 2005). This phenomenon refers to one’s preference for receiving a lesser reward sooner rather than waiting and receiving a greater reward at a future date (Frederick et al., 2002; König &

Kleinmann, 2007). Time-discounting is also regarded as a choice about the trade-offs over decisions that have immediate benefit versus the benefits or consequences of choosing an option that has a later benefit (Frederick et al., 2002). Researchers frequently use money as the object of the temporal decision, where a more immediate monetary reward may be preferred to a longer-term and larger monetary reward (Green & Myerson, 2004; König & Kleinmann, 2007). The preoccupation of SBOMs with cash flow, for example, may be a key factor in decision-making in the context of small business (Gilmore et al., 2004).

There has been little research in relation to time-discounting and its association with SBOMs. The challenges that confront SBOMs, some of which were discussed in Chapter 1, include the time it takes for longer-term planning (Beaver, 2002), the need for decisions about cash flow and short-term profitability (Pompe & Bilderbeek, 2005) and the forceful demands of larger customers (Metts, 2007). The ways SBOMs react to these internal and external environmental pressures may have an impact on their priorities in regard to planning, organising and prioritising. An SBOM's choice to prioritise work to be completed on, for example, project "a" or project "b" may be influenced by the task that presents the higher utility (König & Kleinmann, 2007, p. 33). The time urgency of the moment may cloud the need for proper judgement, and what seems urgent and important may, with more consideration, be seen as important but not urgent (Covey et al., 1994).

2.3.1.4 Monochronicity and polychronicity

The conventional approach to time-management concerns itself with completing tasks in a chronological order within prescriptive time frames (Lakein, 1973; McCay, 1959). This is also the underlying assumption in Section 2.2.1. Monochronic behaviours are typically associated with time-management elements such as planning, organising and scheduling, and with monitoring to ensure that the time frames are adhered to (Adams & Van Eerde, 2010). People who prefer a monochronic approach tend to focus on a single activity at a time while excluding other behaviours and unplanned interruptions. Their tendency is to stick to a plan with its inherent priorities to meet pre-established deadlines (Kaufman-

Scarborough & Lindquist, 1999). Adams and Van Erde (2010) also argue that monochronic behaviours have a strong cultural association; they point that monochronicity, is characteristic of Anglo Saxon and Northern European cultures. In contrast, the authors argue that African, Asian and South American cultures can be characterised by a much looser attention to schedules, punctuality and deadlines and much more attention to people's needs (Adams, 1997).

Polychronicity is a term used to describe the capability of undertaking multiple tasks simultaneously (Bluedorn, 2007; Lindquist & Kaufman-Scarborough, 2004; Souitaris & Maestro, 2010). Ginther and Jacobs (2014) argue that polychronicity is a construct for measuring multitasking. The polychronic approach to time management allows for the accomplishment of multiple and sometimes simultaneous tasks while accommodating interruptions and sudden changes in priorities (Kaufman-Scarborough & Lindquist, 1999). Polychronicity also has an impact on group productivity: the engagement in multiple tasks may cause conflict in goal achievement (Waller, Giambatista, & Zellmer-Bruhn, 1999). It is also reported that in the contemporary business world, where time management is regarded as an important discipline to be practised, multitasking associated with the wide use of electronic devices causes increased distraction in the workplace (Rosen, 2008).

The unremitting and competing demands that face today's businesses and their owners are well documented in the literature (Anderson & Ullah, 2014; Beaver & Jennings, 2005; Chittithaworn et al., 2011), as discussed in Chapter 1. The choice of monochronic or polychronic behaviour or whether there are options to make this choice are relative to particular workplace environments. There is little empirical evidence about the impact of these behaviours on time management. Future research may even consider monochronic and polychronic behaviours as personal time-management dimensions or preferences.

2.3.2 Environmental influences affecting SBOMs' time-management behaviours

The second category of influences, those that affect the time-management behaviours of SBOMs, are referred to as “environmental influences”. There are two broad categories of environmental influences. Internal organisational influences are related to the internal operations of business itself, and either influence or are influenced by managers (Sykes & Crawford, 2007). External organisational influences are largely outside the direct control of a business's manager (Sykes & Crawford, 2007).

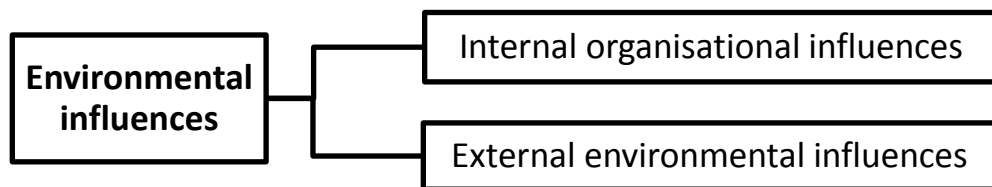


Figure 2.3: Internal and external environmental influences

2.3.2.1 *Internal organisational influences*

Managers of small businesses are usually close to the business operations, which gives them direct influence on all operational aspects (Pansiri & Temtime, 2008). Organisation influences such as size, life-cycle stage, sector and the availability of finance, all affect an SBOM's priorities. Other factors, such as organisational culture and the skills and expertise of employees, may also influence the uptake of continuous-improvement activities such as lean manufacturing (Achanga, Shehab, Roy, & Nelder, 2006).

Pansiri and Temtime, (2010) found a direct correlation between the size of an organisation and a manager's ability to perform effectively, noting that small-business life cycles may have significant implications for time management. Adizes's (1989) life cycle model views a manager's role as continually changing as the organisation grows. In the early stages, the manager is involved in selling,

which is followed by the need to take risks, the need to develop a vision and the implementation of administrative systems to keep up with the growth. This is followed by the need for planning and coordinating and the implementation of better systems; finally, when the company is mature, it is characterised by institutionalised systems, policies and procedures (Adizes, 1989). This model supports the view that in growth-oriented small businesses, a manager's role changes as a business grows, and managers may choose to prioritise their time on different activities to offset the competing demands associated with growth.

More recently, Davidson's (2009, pp. 58-63) life-cycle model supports and extends Adizes (1989) model with its contention that business managers experience crisis in the transition points of growth. The first stage, which Davidson calls the, "founder-led" stage, uses a great deal of a manager's personal time. This is followed by the "structure transition point" stage, where a manager who wants to expand the business must delegate. This point is characterised by stress and overload. The time-management implications of this stage are significant. It would appear that the final stage, called the "bureaucracy transition point", is where the manager can start to delegate more and potentially work less, unless new growth is required (Davidson, 2009).

Another internal influence on SBOMs' time-management behaviours is the team's ability to support their manager in the achievement of the manager's goals. Evidence suggests that there are positive time benefits when employees work as a team (Nurmi, 1996). The achievement of team goals is greatly enhanced when team members share a consensus about the temporal requirements of a project, such as the time it will take to complete a project milestone (Gevers, van Eerde, & Rutte, 2009). When teams cooperate in the planning of a project, evidence also suggests that the team members share more responsibility about the time elements of the plan, and thus have a more realistic expectation of the temporal issues related to future events (Gevers et al., 2009). SBOMs have the opportunity to focus on more strategic issues when they are able to delegate effectively to their

work teams, providing these teams have a strong sense working together and time awareness (Pech, 2009; Yukl & Ping Ping, 1999).

Human-resource issues, which are of constant concern to SBOMs, also affect their time-management behaviours. Perks (2010) found that small businesses experienced ongoing problems such as finding skilled staff and having the time and resources to train them. "Australia is experiencing a skills shortage with the oversupply of workers falling from 45,000 to 17,000" (Stafford, 2010). Brightman and Moran (2001) highlight a range of other human-resource issues, including efficiency, team work, customer focus, and decision-making, that affect a manager's ability to organise priorities. Structure is also an important influence on the time-management culture of a small business. Arnold & Pulisch (2004) note that many organisations now have much flatter structures, which results in different communication challenges as well as increased delegation.

2.3.2.2 *External environment*

Small businesses have fewer resources than larger businesses to compete in an ever-changing global environment (Priestley, 2011). Small businesses feel the impact of "outside environmental forces: government regulation, globalization, competition, technological change and shifting customer demographics" (Cordeiro, 2013, p. 1).

The external business environment also directly and indirectly affects SBOMs' time-management behaviours. Customers, in particular, have a significant impact on the success of small businesses (Chittithaworn et al., 2011). The considerable pressure they exert affects priorities as well as service delivery, and even the nature of service itself (Thomson & Gray, 1999). Retaining existing customers by constantly meeting their changing needs is considered to be easier than attracting new ones, which is regarded as a time-consuming activity (Temtime & Pansiri, 2004). SBOMs may play a personal and close role in the relationship with major customers and meeting their demands, providing rapid responses, keeping records and following up (Eriksson & Li, 2012; Pansiri & Temtime, 2010). The relationships may have all the hallmarks of friendships albeit based on a

commercial relationship (Garzaniti, Stanton, & Pearce, 2011). To expand a customer base, SBOMs may find it necessary to engage in time-consuming activities such as networking and interacting with their customers to understand their needs (Blackburn et al., 2013; Tell, 2012).

The industry sector and the competitive rivalry amongst firms has an influence on a business, its manager and its employees (Porter, 1980). Globalisation has increased competitive rivalry as well as opportunities for growth, as businesses are no longer limited by geography, and selling products and services across the globe becomes an increasingly attractive way to do business (Priestley, 2011). The need for innovative strategies to address task completion is rivalled by the time and resources it takes small-business managers to undertake environmental analysis (Wiesner & Millett, 2012). Wang et al. (2006) contend that most small businesses do not engage in strategic planning because of barriers such as lack of expertise and lack of time.

The influence of communication technologies has profoundly changed the ways people can work (Towers, Duxbury, Higgins, & Thomas, 2006). The choice to invest in technologies requires careful consideration by the SBOM. Researchers have also suggested that as mobile technologies improve, people may be better able to manage work life boundaries (Cousins & Robey, 2015). However, choosing the wrong technologies or those that only suit the manager may have detrimental effects on the business (Cordeiro, 2013). Quaddus and Hofmeyer (2007) contend that many small businesses are still reluctant to benefit from the use of technology. This may be because their managers do not yet realise the time-management benefits of such technologies.

The use of the internet is now a normal part of many small businesses in Australia, although most of them will only be able to make use of its potential when they have access to the National Broadband Network. Studies have shown, despite anecdotal evidence to the contrary, that the use of the internet can lead to an improvement in the working life of managers, particularly in their time management (Gan Kong Guan, Kiong, Koh Liang Kin, & Wong Chit, 2002). Totty

(2007) reports on a number of high-level executives in New York who have reported positive benefits from the use of software such as Outlook, Microsoft's email and calendar application.

Bittman et al (2009, p. 231) found that the increasing dependencies created by the use of communication devices such as mobile phones has been shown in recent Australian studies to "increase employees' sense of being rushed" and the intensification of work (as they toil at a more intense pace, under greater time pressure), resulting in more stressful jobs. Their study suggested that this is a particular issue for the male population.

2.3.3 Summary of influences affecting SBOMs' time-management behaviours

Two categories of influence were addressed in this literature review. The personal influences of the SBOM strongly influence their time-management behaviours. Management styles, including being organised, the perceived control over the work of others, a propensity towards polychronicity or monochronicity and/or procrastination and time-discounting, influence how SBOMs address temporal issues and challenges. Environmental influences, both internal and external to the business, also contribute to ability of an SBOM to effectively manage time. This supports the view that the complex interaction of individuals and their environment enables or hinders their ability to effectively use their time while simultaneously striving to achieve personal and business goals.

2.4 CONSEQUENCES OF SBOMS' TIME-MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS

Proponents of time management argue that a number of positive consequences or outcomes are associated with the use of time-management behaviours (Banford et al., 2014; Green & Skinner, 2005; Moore & Tenney, 2012). Time-management literature, particularly the popular press, espouses the virtues of following a time-management regimen to achieve goals and improve one's overall well-being (Black, 1988; Lakein, 1973; MacKenzie, 1997). In this study, consequences include both the positive and negative outcomes that result from a manager's time-

management behaviours. These consequences (Figure 2.4) are the subject of the final part of this literature review.

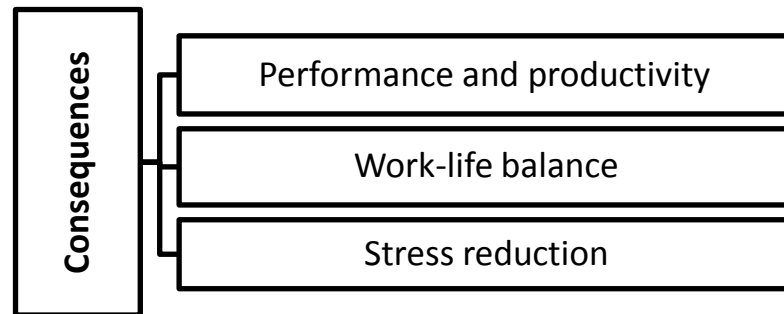


Figure 2.4: Consequences of SBOMs' time-management behaviours

2.4.1 Productivity and performance

In both the time-management and small-business literatures, the terms “performance” and “productivity” are frequently used, often interchangeably (Arnold & Pulisch, 2004). Moore and Tenney (2012, p. 307), however, go to great lengths to differentiate between productivity and performance, describing the former as “performance per unit time.” Performance, in the context of SBOM’s time-management behaviours, is concerned with the effective and efficient use of an individual’s time in pursuit of their goals (Bergin-Seers & Jago, 2007). Productivity, on the other hand, focuses on output (Moore & Tenney, 2012), although, like performance, it may be increased by the appropriate allocation of resources, within time boundaries to achieve focused business objectives (Linetsky, 2008). It has been contended that the measurement of the outcomes of time management is at best difficult, and at worst impossible (Kearns & Gardiner, 2007).

In contrast to larger businesses, small businesses often have much flatter organisational structures that demand efficiency and productivity (Pansiri & Temtime, 2010). Improving the performance of employees through the better application of time-management skills is one way of achieving productivity, making it a constant goal of managers (Arnold & Pulisch, 2004). Time-management behaviours such as the setting of achievable goals and targets are associated with

improvements in performance (Shahin & Mahbod, 2007). Locke and Latham (2006, p. 232) describe a goal as the “value standard that people use to appraise performance.” In a larger organisation a manager’s performance goals are frequently measured by the setting of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or Key Result Areas (KRAs), which “describe the main areas of accountability and responsibility of a job” (Cole, 2013, p. 204). Small-business managers, particularly owner-managers, are often responsible for setting their own performance standards (Bergin-Seers & Jago, 2007), which means that there may be more flexibility and less accountability for the meeting of time deadlines.

A potentially positive consequence for SBOMs, who benefit from the increased efficiencies associated with a more productive work place, is the creation and use of “discretionary time”: that time available after all other work-related obligations involving time are met (Goodin et al., 2005). Discretionary time provides an SBOM with an opportunity to make choices as to how, where and when to spend time. Covey recommended the use of “time zones”, or blocks of time that a manager puts aside to ensure that important activities get their fair share attention (Covey et al., 1994).

Although improving performance is cited as a goal of time management (Adebisi, 2013; Arnold & Pulisch, 2004), evidence in the literature also supports the view that the pressure of time deadlines actually impairs performance, as it places restrictions on the possibility of alternate solutions and actions (Moore & Tenney, 2012). Performance may be compromised and productivity may actually decrease when a person works longer hours (Cooper, 2000). Conversely, having a better work-life balance, which in this context is related to working less, has been linked to improvements in productivity (Maxwell et al., 2007).

2.4.2 Work-life balance

Whereas productivity and performance, in the context of small business and time management, are concerned with output and profitability, work-life balance is concerned with the well-being of the SBOM. A paper presented to the Human

Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (2007) reflects a holistic view of the value of time and how work-life balance can be achieved. The report states:

A truly prosperous society is one that values time as well as money, whether this is time spent with children or other relatives in leisure activities, time spent working voluntarily within community or time spent meeting day-to-day care needs. (p. XII)

Work-life balance is described by Guest (2002) as “a perceived balance between work and the rest of life,” and it presents a set of unique challenges for SBOMs. It has also been described as an elusive term (Kalliath & Brough, 2008) as it is further complicated by the many and varied definitions and interpretations of the individual components of “work”, “life” and “balance” (Guest, 2002). The line between work and other life activities is somewhat blurred when it comes to managers who own businesses and take their work home (Williamson, Lewis, & Massey, 2011). It is even more blurred for home-based business managers, who represent most of the small-business entities in Australia (Walker, Wang, & Redmond, 2008).

Time management is reported to have positive consequences in relation to balance (Green & Skinner, 2005). Managing time better at work is also associated with the reduction in emotional exhaustion and burnout, as goal-setting and planning provide a sense of being in control (Peeters & Rutte, 2005). In Australia, the Fair Work Australia Bill, formally passed by the Australian Senate in April 2009, defines “minimum standards of work-life balance” (Waterhouse & Colley, 2010, p. 156). Such minimum standards are not applicable to SBOMs. Work-life balance presents an ongoing challenge for SBOMs, yet studies have found them hesitant to take up the benefits that it offers (Spinks, 2004). Burke (2007) reports that some managers with whom he came into contact worked 80 to 100 hours per week. Lingard (2008) contends that longer work hours are associated with high levels of work-to-family conflict and increased family tension. The adverse effects of an unbalanced ratio of work to life have been linked with such negative outcomes as

relationship breakdowns, stress, burnout and fatigue (Brown, Bradley, Lingard, Townsend, & Ling, 2010).

An Australian study found that, in many cases, work-life balance is not supported in “an organizational culture which emphasises and rewards long hours and high organizational commitment” (De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott, & Pettit, 2002, p. 4). SBOMs, as described in Chapter 1, reportedly work long hours and are expected to have a high organisational commitment. SBOMs operate in “seasons of intensity” and, to an extent, have the ability to “craft their own work-life balance”, thus exerting a level of control over it (Williamson et al., 2011, p. 2).

Time-management behaviours, as described in Section 2.2.4, play an important role in an SBOM’s ability to control the balance of work and life. In particular, time-management behaviours such as planning, prioritising and setting clearly defined goals, that are achievable within time boundaries give an SBOM some control over how much time is spent at work (Locke & Latham, 2006). Future research may further substantiate the relationship between time management and work-life balance within the context of small-business management, and provide valuable assistance to the overworked, the disorganised and the stressed.

2.4.3 Stress reduction

Though the need for performance and productivity suggests “working smarter, not harder”, and proponents of work-life balance advocate finding a happy medium between work and life, one of the inevitable consequences of working in today’s highly accelerated workplace is stress. The Australian Psychological Society defines stress as “a feeling of being overloaded, wound up tight, tense and worried” (Australian Psychological Society, 2012).

Stress, though usually associated with negative consequences, may be defined in both positive and negative terms in relation to managerial work (Nankervis, Compton, & Baird, 2008). Time-management behaviours, especially planning and executive behaviours, are associated with reducing stress associated with work overload (Allen, 2003; Teratanavat & Kleiner, 2001; Woodhull, 1997). A study

about the effects of time-management training on the work life of managers, found a correlation between the adoption of time-management behaviours such as planning and prioritising and subsequent reductions in the levels of stress (Green & Skinner, 2005).

Overload, which refers to the demands of a job being greater than an individual's ability to capably undertake those demands, is a significant cause of stress in Australian small businesses (Teratanavat & Kleiner, 2001). It is also one of the negative consequences of today's work environment, as described in Chapter 1, that time management sets out to address. Studies reveal, for instance that 25% of Australian managers experience stress due to factors such as information overload, job dissatisfaction and too much work (Nankervis et al., 2008). In relation to the amount of time that people spend at work, SBOMs have fewer controls on their working week, and many spend in excess of 40 hours per week at work (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). The Australian Work Life Index Survey conducted in 2008, found that that the majority of working women feel a strong time strain on their lives (Skinner & Pocock, 2010). Long work hours and the pressure of work has the flow-on effect of making it hard to recuperate (Burke & McAteer, 2007).

Several other influences on SBOMs' time-management behaviours discussed above, such as procrastination (Section 2.3.1.2), are personal influences that may contribute to stress (Albert, 2014; Knaus, 2000) depending on the circumstance. However, procrastination may also alleviate stress, as it may cause the practitioner to put off or reschedule what cannot be done that day and thus reduce the pressures associated with deadline rush (Chu & Choi, 2005). Technological dependencies, such as the ubiquitous use of mobile phones, have been cited as adding to the intensity of work and putting people under greater pressure and resulting in more-stressful jobs (Bittman et al., 2009, p. 231)

The accelerated pace of working life is showing no signs of slowing down (Schöneck, 2015). Time management, particularly in the form of goal-setting, prioritising and scheduling (MacKenzie, 1997), may play a growing role in helping

SBOMs deal with stress through the reduction of work overload and workplace pressures.

2.4.4 Summary of the consequences of SBOMs' time-management behaviours

Based on themes that emerged alongside time management in the literature, improved productivity, better work-life balance and stress reduction are all possible consequences of SBOMs' adoption of time-management behaviours. Then anticipation of achieving these benefits may motivate SBOMs to adopt time-management behaviours. Examining these consequences along with influences provides a more complete picture about benefits and motivations of SBOMs in their adoption of time-management behaviours. The ways in which practising SBOMs realise the positive or negative consequences of engaging in time-management behaviours are further discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

2.5 A GAP IN THE LITERATURE

Research, while continuing to define time management and its consequences, has largely concentrated on structured and predictable environments for data-gathering. Earlier studies about time management concentrated on executives and senior managers as the principal users (Drucker, 1967; McCay, 1959). More recent studies have highlighted the tendency of researchers to base their findings about time management on target groups such as student populations (Bond & Feather, 1988; Eilam & Aharon, 2003; Hlavac, Peterson, & Piscioneri, 2010; Kelly, 2002), employees of larger organisations, government agencies and universities (Green & Skinner, 2005; Macan, 1994, 1996), teachers (Peeters & Rutte, 2005) and various sectors of the medical profession (Covic, Adamson, Lincoln, & Kench, 2003; Ebrahimi et al., 2014; Macan, 1996). While the generic/populist time-management literature may be applicable to a broad cross-section of the working community (Allen, 2003; Black, 1988; Covey et al., 1994; Fiore, 1989; MacKenzie, 1997), few researchers have focused on how SBOMs practise time management in the context of the small-business environment.

The account of the small-business environment as presented in Chapter 1 acknowledges the pivotal role that small business plays in employment, goal achievement and growth (Anderson & Ullah, 2014; Blackburn et al., 2013; Department of Innovation Industry Science Research and Tertiary Education, 2012). It highlights that small business may be fast-paced, turbulent and often reactive (Chittithaworn et al., 2011; Southerton, 2007). Much of the success of small businesses depends on the role that the SBOM plays in maintaining or expanding the business and satisfying the clients' changing needs (Beaver, 2007; Beaver & Jennings, 2005; Pansiri & Temtime, 2010). Time-management behaviours, as illustrated in this literature review, may be a critical factor in the success or failure of a business, as they can lead to increases in productivity, profitability and performance (Adebisi, 2013; Arnold & Pulisch, 2004).

Finally, the challenge for time-management research itself in remaining relevant is to move beyond the "mechanics of time management" and embrace a broader theoretical framework (Burt et al., 2009; Claessens et al., 2009). The TiME scale (Burt et al., 2009), for example, both represents a way forward for time-management research and is an example of a more recent instrument that takes into account the influence of context and workplace environment on participants' time-management behaviours. By examining how SBOMs' personality traits and the workplace environment in which they operate affect their time-management behaviours, this research represents a significant contribution to both the literature and the practice of time management in workplace environments which has largely been overlooked by existing research. Also, by examining consequences along with influences provides a more complete picture about benefits and motivations of SBOMs in their adoption of time-management behaviours.

2.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study explores the influences affecting the time-management behaviours of small-business managers in Australia. The Claessens et al. (2009) includes four dimensions of time management behaviour which are reflected in the research questions.

The first research question aims at understanding time management from the perspective of an SBOM:

Research question 1:

What are the planning, monitoring, executive and time-assessment behaviours of small-business owner-managers in Australia?

The second research question aims at determining the influences that affect how SBOMs manage their time:

Research question 2:

How do personal and environmental factors influence the time-management behaviours of small-business owner-managers?

The third research question addresses the consequences associated with the adoption of time-management behaviours:

Research question 3:

What are the productivity, work-life balance and stress-related consequences that result from the adoption of time-management behaviours by small-business owner-managers?

Chapter 3: Methodology, presents a case for a qualitative approach, using a case-study methodology that incorporates time logs, in-depth qualitative interviews and participant feedback. This approach is necessary for the exploration of time management in the context of the SBOM and the small-business workplace.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter outlines a case for a qualitative approach using a case-study methodology that incorporates time logs, qualitative interviews and participant feedback. This approach enables an in-depth exploration of time management in the context of the SBOM and the small-business workplace, the influences that affect time management behaviours and the consequences that result from adopting such behaviours. The use of a qualitative approach, and in particular a case-study methodology, enabled the researcher to study both the complexities associated with the phenomenon of time management and the context within which it is practised (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The lack of substantive analysis surrounding the nature of and influences on SBOMs' time-management behaviours represents a gap in the literature and an opportunity for this research.

3.2 THE CASE FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The building of a "complex and holistic picture" of the research participants, in the context of their work environment, is at the heart of qualitative research (Creswell, 2013, p. 300). This research posits that both the nature of time-management behaviours, from the perspective of SBOMs, as well as the factors influencing these behaviours, are unique, complex and interrelated, and that the research would benefit from a holistic approach (Covey et al., 1994). The factors that influence a manager's time-management behaviours and their consequences are best dealt with through the "documentation and description" of the participants' experiences (Vivar, McQueen, Whyte, & Armayor, 2007, p. 64). The documentation and description are further explored through the use of a case-study methodology (Section 3.4) using in-depth interviews that are then analysed (Section 3.5).

The literature review in Chapter 2 has revealed that much of the attention in time-management research has focused on improving personal performance through better planning and organisation, which, it is argued, leads to improved

productivity and personal well-being (Adebisi, 2013; Green & Skinner, 2005; Macan, 1996). However, less attention has been directed towards the personal experience of and context within which the process of time management is practised. An advantage of using a qualitative method is the ability to understand the detailed personal experiences of individuals, and in particular their perspective on the circumstances surrounding these experiences (Veal, 2005).

The nature of qualitative research “resists attempts to impose a single umbrella-like paradigm over the entire project” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, Preface, p. xv). The phenomenon of time management is defined in many ways (Section 2.2), and its meaning and application will be further enhanced by allowing for the possibility of questioning or enhancing the paradigm. This exploratory research seeks to contribute to the understanding of how time management is integrated into the management practices of SBOMs, rather than “seeking external causes or laws of behaviour” (Veal, 2005, p. 125).

Qualitative research is also applicable where “individual belief intersects with culture” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Silverman (2009, p. 113) points out that “the strength of qualitative research is its ability to access directly what happens in the world, i.e. to examine what people actually do in real life rather than asking them to comment upon it”. While the in-depth qualitative interviews in the current study encouraged research participants to comment on their time usage, the time logs, which the participants completed during the interview process, enabled a valuable dialogue about the reality of time spent at work.

3.3 METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM

Ontology is “a philosophical belief system about the nature of social reality – what can be known and how” (Hess-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 4). The philosophical platform that underpins this study of time management presents a social reality and context which, this research contends, is at present only superficially understood and yet is the subject of broad discussion and voluminous writings. What is known about time management in workplace contexts, is frequently

discussed but rarely questioned, and how it is used in a small-business environment is a virtually uncharted territory.

This qualitative research is underpinned by a constructivist epistemology. Constructivists contend that truth is relative and contingent upon one's perspective (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The constructivist perspective enables the development of theories, patterns and emerging themes based on qualitative data gathered in the field. These emerging themes are essential to the understanding of both of the ways SBOMs practise time management and the influences that shape their time-management behaviours. The constructivist perspective, which guides this research, asserts that "the world is constantly being constructed through group interactions, and thus, social reality can be understood via the perspectives of social actors enmeshed in meaning-making activities" (Hess-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 5). In this case, the social actors are SBOMs who work in an environment that places demands on their time as well as their effort. The constructivist epistemology is the most appropriate philosophical underpinning for this research because the study seeks to understand how time management is practised from the perspective of SBOMs. Their unique perspectives on their own time-management behaviours are a construction based on a range of personal, environmental influences and consequences.

3.4 CASE STUDY AS THE METHODOLOGY FOR THIS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The research goals and objectives were achieved using a case-study methodology, which helped in the promotion and understanding of "holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events" (Yin, 2009, p. 4). In this study, this meant that time-management behaviours were examined in the context of the real-life events that surrounded the demanding and time consuming work of the participating SBOMs.

A broad outcome of the research was to "expand and generalise theories rather than enumerate frequencies" (Yin, 2009, p. 15). The first of two factors that Yin (2009, p. 18) points to as being critical for case-study research are the

investigation of contemporary phenomena within a real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and their context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2009, p. 18). The boundaries between time-management behaviours and the context of the SBOM are not clearly evident, which suggests strong support for the case-study methodology. Secondly, Yin (2009) supports the use of a case-study methodology when many more variables of interest and multiple sources of evidence are needed to form a more accurate picture of the particular phenomenon in context. The variables pertaining to SBOMs include their personal differences, preferences and goals as well the work environment they have created and the industry within which their business operates; the characteristics and quantity of these variables also support the use of a case-study methodology.

In their summary of the objectives of case-study research, Dul and Hak (2008, p. 24) report three common uses of the case study as a research tool: a) when the topic is broad and highly complex; (b) when there is not a great deal of theory available; and (c) when context is very important. These three characteristics are particularly relevant to this research. The topic of time-management behaviours is broad, and its complexity can be attributed to both the individualisation of its application and the multitude of contextual variables that are apparent in the small-business management environment. While there is considerable literature surrounding time management, little of it is empirically based, and even less applies to the context associated with specific work situations such as the small-business sector (Claessens et al., 2007).

Hakim (2000, p. 59) regards the case study as “the social equivalent of the spot light or microscope”. A case study may focus on a single person (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009), supporting the proposition that a case may be that of a single unit of study such as a manager (Stake, 2006). In the context of this research, a number of case studies revolve around individual managers who own and/or manage small businesses and have had at least 10 years’ experience in the small-business sector.

Creswell (2013, p. 97) argues that the case-study methodology is “a type of design in qualitative research, which may be an object of study, as well as a product of

that inquiry". While there is a range of accepted practices that fit under the umbrella of case-study research, this research will refer to case studies as a research methodology that uses in-depth qualitative interview as its principal source of data-gathering.

3.5 THE IN-DEPTH QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW

From the outset, the nature of this study was one of exploration and interpretation. Using O'Leary's "Interview Types" model, the qualitative interviews were "one-on-one", semi-structured and informal (O'Leary, 2005). The in-depth qualitative interviews promoted the gathering of rich and diverse data covering a range of both known and unknown factors that were associated with the time-management behaviours of practising SBOMs. O'Leary further suggests that the semi-structured interview "can start with a defined questioning plan, but will shift in order to follow the natural flow of the conversation" (O'Leary, 2005, p. 116). The use in this research of a combination of structured and open-ended inquiry enabled a free-flowing dialogue between researcher and participant that was guided in part by existing theory as well as the exploration of emergent time-management behaviour themes. It was also important that a certain amount of informality was established and maintained throughout the interviews, as this encouraged a rapport based on trust and openness between the researcher and the 10 SBOMs who were interviewed.

With the permission of the participating SBOMs, each of the interviews was digitally recorded for the purpose of clarification, ongoing analysis and reflection on the dialogue. Written transcripts of these digital recordings were used as the basis for further analysis.

Thomas (2004, p. 167), in his support of the semi-structured style of interview, recognised that questions "may even need to be worded differently for different respondents if they are to have the same meaning for all respondents". Wording questions differently was both necessary and a natural part of the second and third interviews with the SBOMs. Kvale (1996, p. 2) refers to "changes to sequence and forms of questions", which in this research allowed me to encourage participants

to provide personal responses and reflections about their time-management experiences.

The context was also a critical factor in the framing and content of the questions (Thomas, 2004). It was found, as will be further discussed in Chapter 5, that context had a significant influence on SBOMs' time-management behaviours. Context also came into play in regard to the location of the interviews. Interviews were held in the most convenient locations for the participants including quiet work offices, the researcher's home office, work quiet spaces, training venues, cafes and restaurants, and using Skype for participants who could not physically attend the interviews in person. This allowed the participants to feel relaxed in a non-threatening environment.

3.6 SAMPLING

It is acknowledged that the number of cases a researcher should include in a study provides an ongoing dilemma for qualitative researchers. This research proved to be no exception. The methodological approach was guided by Yin (2009) and Stake (2005), who both base their approach to case studies on the constructivist paradigm (Baxter & Jack, 2008). While the initial sample of five yielded a range of informative emerging themes, a decision was made during the exploration to include five additional case studies to further enhance the quality, depth and validity of the data. The completion of a total of 10 case studies enabled a more nuanced understanding of emerging themes and provided a stronger basis for the conclusions reached.

Table 3.1 summarises participants' business type and the length of owner-manager experience.

Table 3.1: Participating SBOMs' occupations and experience

| SBOM | BUSINESS TYPE | EXPERIENCE |
|-------------|---|-------------------|
| SBOM 1 | Manufacturing-improvement consultancy | 20 years |
| SBOM 2 | Creative solutions for media | 32 years |
| SBOM 3 | Machine-parts designer and manufacturer | 24 years |
| SBOM 4 | Customer relationship management design | 11 years |
| SBOM 5 | IT networking consulting | 22 years |
| SBOM 6 | Bicycle retail | 35 years |
| SBOM 7 | Outdoor adventure company | 10 years |
| SBOM 8 | IT systems administration | 15 years |
| SBOM 9 | Leadership consultancy | 27 years |
| SBOM 10 | IT networks and support | 18 years |

Sampling was “purposive”, aimed at providing more in-depth exploratory information on a few research participants rather than less information about a larger population (Lee & Lings, 2008, p. 213). While a cross-section of SBOMs was targeted from a range of different industry sectors, for this study participants were primarily chosen based on a range of criteria about their length of service, experience and stake-holding in their business.

3.7 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The research participants for this study were small-business owner-managers (SBOMs). They belonged to the small-business sector that makes up approximately 10% of all businesses in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015). As noted in Chapter 1, a small business is defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as one employing between five and 19 people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

Specific characteristics of the SBOMs who were asked to participate in this study include:

1. Key stakeholder in the business: they have an interest in the success of the business and are willing to use their time to keep the business afloat. Every aspect of the business success reflects on their role in the business.
2. Key strategic planning role: they can strongly influence the direction and priorities of the business (a key time-management consideration)
3. Minimum 10 years in the business

Participants either owned their business or had a major shareholding in the business. As shown in Table 3.1, they all had been in business for at least 10 years. This was significant, as it demonstrated that the SBOMs had some degree of success or longevity in their business, enabling them to reflect on their approach to time management using broad experience over a long period of time.

3.8 INTERVIEW DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

A challenge for the gathering of research data was to design and develop a series of semi-structured interviews for the SBOM participants. A pilot study was undertaken with an independent SBOM who provided extensive feedback from which a series of interviews was developed.

3.8.1 Pilot study

The purpose of the pilot study was to clarify issues surrounding time- management behaviour from the perspective of an SBOM. The data collected during the pilot study was analysed, then used in conjunction with the literature review to develop a series of interview questions that were used during the semi-structured interviews with the SBOMs. The pilot-study SBOM, is referred to as “SBOM 0”, and was a very experienced SBOM who had worked in various owner-manager roles for approximately 30 years. The interview questions asked of him were intended to be similar to the actual interviews that were conducted with the main study’s SBOM research participants. Questions were framed and presented to SBOM 0, and

his reactions and feedback proved critical in the further design and development of a more robust and appropriate set of interview questions; these questions were used as a basis for the remainder of the research data-gathering for this study.

Although three initial interviews were planned with SBOM 0, five interviews were actually carried out as the feedback caused the researcher to rethink a number of aspects of the questionnaires. The five interviews were conducted over a three-month period, which gave the interviewee time to reflect on the themes and to provide feedback to the researcher, and gave the researcher time to reflect in turn. The initial questions in the interview with SBOM 0 were quite broad, and included questions about the nature of his work as well as his understanding of time management. All of the pilot interviews with SBOM 0 took a similar approach: a series of questions followed by an in-depth discussion about some of the emerging themes to gain clarity and to understand their importance.

Specific insights that emerged from the pilot interviews:

1. The feedback provided during the pilot interviews, including field notes and observations, assisted in the design and structure of the interviews for the 10 case studies. SBOM 0's feedback helped with the wording and meaning of questions.
2. The complexity of time management became clearer during the pilot interviews. They showed how time management was integrated into the everyday workings of an SBOM; for example SBOM 0 automatically used an electronic calendar to plan his week. I noticed from the outset that this calendar consisted principally of key events rather than "full days" of events and deadlines. Most of the days had gaps. When this was discussed with the SBOM, it became clear that much of the detail was in his head. This would prove to be the case for many of the other participants.
3. The importance of flexibility in the day-to-day work of this SBOM, whose circumstances changed regularly, also became clearer. Following on from the previous point, the flexibility that this experienced SBOM needed to

function according to his expectations enabled him to manage time his way, using his own style and based on the goals that he wanted to achieve.

4. He made time for me because he felt that reflecting on his time-management behaviours could in turn help him in his use of time. SBOM 0 considered that having an objective observer interview him would be personally beneficial. Although this was not the intended purpose of my research, it was also considered to be an important outcome of the interviews with the 10 participating SBOMs.
5. The pilot interviews helped me appreciate and value the time that the SBOM gave up for the sake of the research.
6. SBOM 0 also provided valuable insights into the influences that affected his time-management behaviours. Influences included his personal values and his need to be involved in the community and to spend time with his family.

3.8.2 Interviews with SBOMs

The pilot interviews enabled the development of a set of three interviews that were conducted with each of the 10 participating SBOMs. The three interviews were interrelated and depended on each other for clarification and depth.

Richards (2010, pp. 44-45) sets out a number of important considerations of which the researcher needs to be aware before commencing interviews; these include ethical considerations (Section 3.12), including the participant's perception of the interview, and the best setting for each interview.

3.8.3 Preparation for the interviews

The three interviews conducted with the participating SBOMs were broken up as follows:

Table 3.2: Focus of the three interviews with the research participants

| First interview | Second interview | Third interview |
|--|---|--|
| The SBOM, the business, the person and the context | Clarification of comments made during interview 1, reflection on the time logs and influences | Further clarification, reflection on the past two interviews and further discussion about influences |

Before starting the first of the in-depth qualitative interviews, a formal letter was sent to each of the 10 participants outlining the purpose of the intended research and requesting their involvement. In line with the University of Wollongong Ethics Approval procedure, a consent form for the participants to sign (Appendix 1) was also included in the letter to ensure that they freely and willingly consented to being part of the study and understood what they were consenting to. Confidentiality, in regard to the interview process, was communicated in the consent form. Participants were also informed that they could discontinue the interviews at any time.

3.8.4 First interview – setting the boundaries

The purpose of the first semi-structured interview was to understand how the SBOM perceived and practised time management (Appendix 2). The first interview also provided an insight into the experience and context within which the SBOM managed the business. Key elements of the first interview were:

- a) The development of a rapport with the SBOM. This was achieved by the use of open-ended questions that enabled the SBOM to reflect on the nature of their business and the general approach and style that the SBOM used in managing the business;

- b) The establishment of boundaries, expectations and procedures early in the first interview. This enabled the participant SBOM to clarify any uncertainties and issues, such as confidentiality, that may have arisen; and
- c) The work and workload of the SBOM, using questions that encouraged the SBOM to speak about the main parts of their everyday work; for example, “Describe the main parts of the work that you are involved in as manager of the business” and “What percentage of time do these activities take up?”

This type of questioning enabled the SBOMs to reflect directly on their workload while also introducing “time” into the dialogue as a critical factor. Questions about workplace pressure and stress were also integrated in the first interview’s questions; this added to the contextual understanding of the workplace and the SBOMs’ reaction to such influences.

A range of questions specifically about the participants’ understanding of time management and time-management behaviours formed the basis of the next section of the questions.

- a) The beginning of an ongoing dialogue about the SBOM’s time-management behaviours and finding out about the SBOM’s attitude towards time management.
- b) Discussion about the use of the time log as a data-gathering tool and an explanation of how to use it in the context of this research; and
- c) The beginnings of the exploration of the influences that affect the SBOM’s time-management behaviours.

The first of the three interviews with each SBOM was the most structured. This ensured that a quantum of data was gathered with which to follow up in the second round of interviewing. In the majority of cases, the first interviews took place at the participants’ work premises, with the exception of two participants

who completed all three interviews on Skype. Any ethical considerations and procedural considerations were also discussed.

Each of the SBOMs was provided with a blank time log (Appendix 3 contains two completed examples) and asked to complete it for a working week between the first and second interviews. A discussion about how to complete the time log also took place. An electronic version of the time log was also made available to the participants, although a number of them used their own electronic versions of the time logs. Each SBOM was asked to complete the time log for a total of three to five days over the whole period between the first and second interviews. This time log was used to help to inform the subject matter of the second interview.

3.8.5 Second interview – the in-depth conversation

The purposes of the second interview were to explore in more depth the time-management issues raised during the first interview and to review the completed time logs (Appendix 2). The second interview also focused on the influences affecting SBOM's time-management behaviours.

Key elements of the second interview were as follows:

- a) Further development and awareness of SBOMs' time-management behaviours based on comments made during the first interviews. This was achieved by reviewing the responses from the first interview and following up on time-management-related comments. For example, the second interview with one SBOM included a follow-up question relating to the issues of delegation that they had discussed during the first interview:

Question: *One of the themes, when we were talking about time management, was the difficulty in delegating work to other employees. Would you like to talk a little bit about that?*

Response: *I guess it comes back to um the type of work we're trying to do. Um, we certainly delegate some activities to employees. But*

there are certain activities we probably haven't skilled our people up on or our people aren't good enough to do - to do things. (SBOM1:2)

- b) The influences affecting SBOMs' time-management behaviours were explored. In particular, personality was discussed in relation to time-management behaviours.
- c) The discussion about the time log both provided a reality check for the research participant in terms of intention versus actual usage and provided further information about the circumstances of the participant's logging of work-related events.

In most instances, the second interview took place approximately four to six weeks after the first interview. This time interval was designed, once issues surrounding time management were brought to the fore in the first interview, to both further explore the participant's responses and to seek respondent validation (Lee and Lings 2008). The second interview proved to be most important in gathering data on the factors that influence time-management behaviours, based on reflections on the time logs. The SBOMs had sufficient time to complete the time log as well as to think about their time-management behaviours. Initial themes that emerged from the first interviews were also delved into more deeply and clarified during this second interview. By the time of the second interviews, and because of the completion of the time log between the two interviews, there was a definite heightened sense of awareness about time management generally, and the SBOMs' time-management behaviours in particular.

A range of factors that potentially influence time-management behaviours were discussed in the second part of the literature review, Section 2.3, under the broad themes of personal and environmental influences. During the second interview, these factors were integrated into the questioning to generate responses on their respective influences. It was envisioned that factors other than those discussed in the literature review would emerge during this "conversation"; this was the case, and the participant's responses added to the data that had already been gathered. These responses are reported in Chapter 4.

3.8.6 Third interview – reflection and respondent validation

The purpose of the third interview was to have an opportunity to delve more deeply into factors that surrounded the SBPOMs' time-management behaviours as well as to reflect and make sense of time-management issues and patterns that had been discussed in previous interviews.

The format of the third interview was as follows:

- a) Summary of ideas revealed in previous interviews;
- b) Clarification and further probing of ideas from previous interviews; and
- c) Opportunity to delve into factors that influenced time-management behaviours and "bigger picture influences" that had not been specifically covered before.

The researcher's goals for the third interview were:

- a) Check with the participant about meaning from previous interviews;
and
- b) Capture any further data on factors pertaining to time-management behaviours.

It was important for the researcher to listen to the final thoughts of the SBOMs interviewed. The third interview was the least structured of the three: only a few topics were introduced, which enabled the participants to reflect and comment. As the SBOMs were at ease with the interviewer, responses tended to be quite forthcoming.

3.8.7 Time logs

The SBOMs' completion of the time log between the first and second interviews was an essential way of gaining some personal, specific and contextual data about the time-management behaviours. The process of completing the time log itself also heightened their awareness about their time-management behaviours.

Time logs are not a new method of data collection in the context of time management. Authors such as McCay (1959) advocated such methods more than 50 years ago. Despite the length of time they have been in use, they continue to be a valuable research tool, as they provide an account of time usage from the perception of the recorder. In the following chapter, the model that is used to analyse time-management behaviours by Claessens et al. (2007) refers to time logs as part of time-planning behaviours, which is one of the four principal time-management behaviour dimensions used to frame the analysis of this research. In particular, the time log was used to help raise the awareness on the part of those interviewed about their actual, as opposed to perceived, use of time. It was particularly useful in determining influences from internal staff as well as customers.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

3.9.1 Analysis of the semi-structured interviews

The analysis of data was guided by the three research questions. Richards (2010, p. 34) describes qualitative data as “records of observation or interaction that are complex and contexted, and they are not easily reduced immediately (or, sometimes, ever) to numbers”. Reducing data is described as “the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming of the data” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 12). Lee and Lings (2008, p. 236) describe this process as “reducing the rich data down to a set of core ideas”. Using a logical and systematic framework is the preferred way of gaining “rich meaningful understandings” out of seemingly “messy, complex and chaotic raw data” (O’Leary, 2005, p. 229). The stages of the data analysis process are outlined in Table 3.3 below:

Table 3.3: The data analysis process – based on O’Leary’s (2005) model

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Data collection | The collection of data, involved identification of suitable SBOMs and the conducting of three interviews, with each of those participants, over a six to eight week period. All of the interviews were electronically recorded and field notes were taken. At the first interview, participants were requested to complete time logs between the first and second interviews (see Section 4.1.2 for more details about the time logs). |
| Organising and sorting of data | Organising and sorting the data, included the transcription of data from electronic recordings to ‘Microsoft Word Documents’. Each research participant was allocated a code name and number based on the order of the first interviews. The first interview with the first SBOM was coded as ‘SBOM1’ and this coding system continued through to the final participant who was coded as ‘SBOM10’. Each of the interviews was further coded with respect to the particular interviews that took place. SBOM1’s first interview was coded as SBOM1:1 and the second and third interviews were coded as SBOM1:2 and SBOM1:3 respectively. In addition, the order that the quotations appear in the case studies, in this chapter, have been further identified using the letter ‘Q’ followed by a number that denotes that order. For example, ‘SBOM1:1Q1’ refers to the first quotation that appears in the case study in regard to the first interview. This enables a ready reference for the purpose of identifying the relationship between the five emerging themes (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.5) and the sources of their origin. |
| Coding and entering data | Coding and entering data and Stage 5, analysing data, were supported by the use of NVivo. Initially, the data, from the interview transcripts, were ‘open coded’ using NVivo’s node categories. A detailed account of the stages of coding is presented below (Section 3.9.2). |
| Analysing data | The analysis of data was an iterative process and integrated into the coding of data. Ascribing codes (Refer to Section 3.9.2 below) prompted some initial analysis as it involved sorting and categorising from open codes to the principal codes which were based on the key elements of the research questions. |
| Searching for meaning | Searching for meaning was also an iterative process that began during the interviews and continued both throughout the coding process and the writing of this thesis. During the |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| | actual interview process, the second interview explored many of the time-management related topics which were the subject of the first interview, including the time logs, which helped clarify coding categories. The process which started with open coding, eventually resulted in the categorisation of five emerging themes. Chapter five addresses the three research questions and discusses the meanings which emerged from the data. |
| Interpreting results | Along with the search for meaning, Chapter 5 also interprets the results based on the three research questions. |
| Uncovering findings | Five themes emerged from the overall search for meaning and the interpretation of results. These themes are discussed further in section 3.11.2. |
| Drawing conclusions | Chapter 6 presents the conclusions of the research based on a systematic analysis of the data. |

3.9.2 Coding

Coding provided its own challenges in this research. Bryman and Bell, (2007, p. 594) present a series of steps that may be used in the coding process. The analysis of the data, the search for meaning and the interpretation of results were carefully undertaken in the light of the research questions. Richards (2010, p. 94), while acknowledging the importance of data reduction in storing information, suggests that the main aim in qualitative coding is data retention. Richards (2010, pp. 99-104) breaks down coding into three types: descriptive, topic and analytical. Analytical coding, in particular, which requires interpretation, was critical for this research.

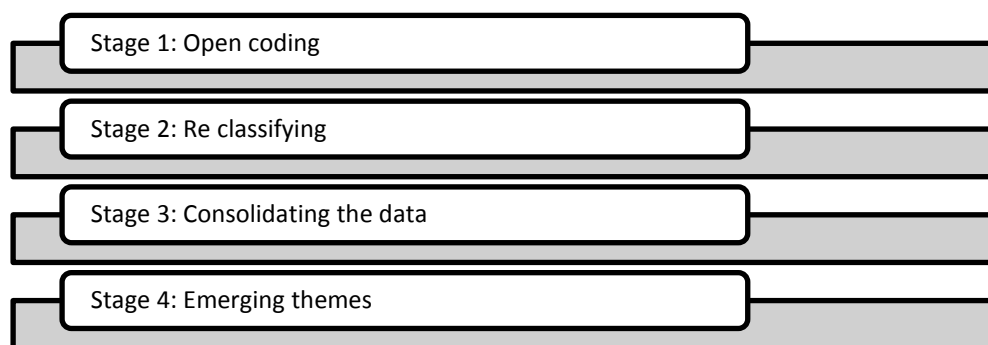
Coding the rich and complex data generated in this research, through the series of in-depth qualitative interviews with SBOMs, was enhanced with the support of a sophisticated software program called NVivo (Version 10). It is a well-established qualitative software program, and was chosen as the most appropriate software tool to assist with this research. NVivo has five key functions that were critical for the data in this study: the management of data, the management of ideas, the

ability to query data, the capability of graphical modelling and the ability to generate reports (Bazeley, 2007, pp. 2-3).

First, all of the transcripts of the SBOM interviews were imported into NVivo. Each research participant's name was individually coded with SBOM followed by a number identifying the participant and interview; for example SBOM1:1 meant that this was the first interview with the first SBOM. NVivo uses a hierarchy of coding classification based on "nodes." The Digital Social Science Centre at Columbia University (2015) describes a node as a "container for qualitative data".

The principal stages in the coding process are outlined in Figure 3.1 below:

Figure 3.1: The four stages of the coding process



The first stage of open coding was carried out by analysing each of the transcripts and extracting all of the themes related to time-management behaviours, influences and consequences. For example, in the first round of open coding, SBOM2 had made the following comment: *"...at this stage of the game you can't get anybody else to do that work"*. This comment related to delegation, so a node was created called "delegation." Every time this theme emerged in any of the dialogues, the sentence/s or paragraphs were clustered under "delegation." This meant that at the end of the open-coding exercise, a whole range of themes related to time management were broadly categorised under nodes. Nodes and their respective sub-nodes could be re arranged after the open coding to reflect stronger themes as they emerged.

The second stage of coding involved re classifying the numerous open codes into general categories which addressed the three research questions. The principal categories were labelled as: 'Influences', 'Time-management behaviours' and 'Consequences'. Additional stage two categories, such as 'Time issues' and 'Business issues', were used to group codes, that had some bearing on the research but whose impact on the research had not yet been decided. Some of the coded data which were grouped under those additional categories, for example data about the size of the business and the number of employees, were used as background information for the Chapter 4 case studies.

The third stage of coding consolidated the data, under the three principal research categories, into sub categories which could be most readily applied to the interview data. For instance, the principal category of 'Time-management behaviour', using Claessens et al.'s (2009) four dimensional model, was already broken down into four dimensions: Planning behaviours, Monitoring behaviours, Executive behaviours and Time assessment behaviours. Planning behaviours, for example, were further broken down to five sub categories of behaviours: Goal setting, Prioritising, Organising, Scheduling, Strategic planning and Project planning (Refer to Table 4.1). The third stage of coding proved to be an iterative process and, as the interviews were further analysed, modifications to the sub category headings were made to reflect better descriptions of influences, time-management behaviours and consequences. Table 4.1, in the following chapter, outlines the consolidated codes which were used throughout the data analysis.

The fourth stage of coding took place both during and after the analysis stage. The fourth stage of coding was a higher level interpretation of the data and its goal was to look for meaning beyond the four dimensional framework which addressed the research questions. This stage represented a broad analysis of all the data to find common emerging themes about the uniqueness of time management from the perspective of SBOMs. It became more evident, as the study progressed, that the practice of time management by SBOMs, taking into account influences and consequences, was highly individualised. Five themes which describe this

individualisation emerged from the fourth stage of analysis and provided a new paradigm about SBOMs' practice of time management. Data which relates to these five themes is presented in Chapter 4 at the end of each of the Case studies. A more detailed description of the makeup of the codes and the link between the case study data and the coding is presented in Section 3.11.2 and 3.11.3.

3.9.3 Analysis of the time logs

Much of the analysis of the time logs occurred in situ during the actual interviews, with the study participants providing "respondent validation" to the questions surrounding the time intervals that were discussed during the interviews (Richards, 2010, p. 148). Field notes were also taken about the responses to questioning about the activities in the time logs (Richards, 2010, p. 41).

3.10 VALIDITY IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Dul and Hack, (2008, p. 260) refer to Adcock and Colliers (2001), who report the many adjectives used to describe validity - for example "construct", "content", "criterion" and "convergent" (validity) - as being reflections on different kinds of evidence required for validity. Validity is ultimately about truth and knowledge, and the evidence is there to support or determine what that truth is (Kvale, 1996, p. 236). The positivist view of scientific validity is about numerical measurement, whereas the qualitative view takes an alternative philosophical standpoint, questioning both the nature of reality and the perception of what truth is (Kvale, 1996). Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 314) highlight the different meaning of validity in the qualitative context, and introduce their term "member checks", whereby the researcher checks with respondents about the intending meaning of their responses; this gives the researcher the chance to fix any errors. Lincoln and Guba (1985) are thus replacing "internal validity" with "credibility" (Gill & Johnson, 2010). Lincoln and Guba (1985) go on to add a further dimension of "transferability", which is the qualitative researcher's replacement for "external validity".

Dul and Hack, (2008, p. 262) provide a definition of validity that focuses on quality in the context of qualitative research that was appropriate for this research. They include the following in their definition:

- a) Determining the appropriate object for measurement
- b) Locating the object of measurement
- c) Extracting evidence from such objects
- d) Identifying, selecting and accessing sources of evidence
- e) Recording the evidence that is extracted
- f) Coding and recording the data.

If each of these procedures is applied “against the requirements that can be deduced from the precise definition of the variable that is measured”, this provides validity in the context of qualitative research (Dul & Hak, 2008, p. 262).

Triangulation was used to support the validity of this research. It is described by Flick (2002, p. 226) as a “combination of different methods, study groups, local and temporal settings, and different theoretical perspectives in dealing with a phenomenon”. In this research, triangulation was possible with the use of interviews, time logs and respondent validation (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 396) which was essential for member checking, as mentioned above. By taking the results of the first interview back to the subjects, in this case small-business managers, data and interpretation can be verified.

The problem of “anecdotalism”, which is a researcher’s attempt to “base conclusions on a small number of quotes or examples that epitomise key points”, is a constant source of concern in qualitative analysis (Lee & Lings, 2008, p. 228). This issue “constantly questions the validity of much qualitative research” (Silverman, 2000, p. 11). This was addressed primarily through “respondent validation”, whereby participants’ responses in the first interview were refined in the two follow-up interviews (Silverman, 2010, p. 274). However it is not claimed that the findings from such small findings can be generalised, but rather that the

rich detail gained through this research can add to our understanding of time-management behaviours in the context of small businesses.

3.11 RELIABILITY

3.11.1 Reliability in qualitative research

Veal (2005, p. 42) defines reliability as “the extent to which research findings would be the same if the research were to be repeated at a later date or with a different sample or objects.” Reliability is about the consistency of research findings (Kvale, 1996, p. 229). The question of reliability in the context of the this case-study methodology was defined in terms of “dependability” (Gill & Johnson, 2010, p. 229). The onus on dependability as the replacement for reliability is on the researcher, who must provide clear audit trails and methodologies that can be replicated (Gill & Johnson, 2010). Flick (2002, p. 220) uses the term “procedural reliability”, and asserts that “the quality of recording and documenting data” adds to this dependability. For interviews, which were the principal data-collection method used in this research, reliability is further enhanced when the interviewer has sufficient training and both interview guides and generative questions are checked after the first interview (Flick, 2002).

Reliability also comes under attack in data collection and analysis as it is often based on a single researcher’s interpretation of events or observations. What is included in the actual research paper may only be a small part of the actual narrative, and thus is open to questions of subjectivity (Lee & Lings, 2008; Silverman, 2000). Reliability in the context of this qualitative research was achieved through what O’Leary (2005, p. 68) refers to as “consistency in methods” and “procedural reliability”, as mentioned above. Consistent methods and procedures were adopted to gather the data for each of the participating SBOMs, and all data was transcribed and analysed using the same approach.

3.11.2 Coding reliability

While the rigorous coding which took place in stage three, as described in 3.9.2 and is detailed in Chapter 4, addressed the three research questions, stage four coding

provided a higher level interpretation to the quantum of data. In order to ensure a strong level of procedural reliability and consistency, a set of criteria were established for the interpretation of the data in relation to the five emerging themes. Table 3.2 below is a guide to how the data from the case studies, and in particular the quotations relating to each SBOM, were systematically analysed.

Table 3.4: Characteristics of the five emerging themes

| Personalised | Integrated | Informal | Pragmatic | Flexible |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference for certain kinds of work suited to the interests of the SBOM • Preference for work that the SBOM enjoyed most • Work that involved the SBOMs' technical and skilled input • Individual approach to time management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-tasking and polychronic behaviours • Integration of time management with overall management approach • Separation of time work and home • Less mechanical organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non formal time management practices • Time management practises evident but not written down • Planning and monitoring took place 'on the run' as opposed to e.g. in a planning meeting • Planning was regarded as a means to an end | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A practical approach to completing tasks given the time and deadline challenges • Time assessment was used in the background as a guide | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to adapt to changing circumstances • Flexibility in adhering to time schedules • Flexible response to constantly changing customer & employee needs • Accommodating to competing demands of work and life |

3.11.3 Relating the case study data to the five emerging themes

The following examples of the five emerging themes are taken from a cross section of examples from the ten tables in Chapter 4 (e.g. **Table 4.6 Linking Case Study 1 quotations to emergent themes**) which links examples of case studies quotations to the five themes. The comments, after the emergent theme heading, explains the reason for the emerging theme categorisation. A note has been added to show the relationship between the coding of the quotation and the emerging themes.

Personalised: SBOM1's high attention to detail and his personal involvement in updating documentation as evidenced in his comments about: *...getting bogged*

down in technical stuff. (SBOM1:1Q4). Note: this quotation was coded as 'Time Assessment' which is one of the four dimensions of time-management behaviour.

Integrated: SBOM3 integrates his time-management behaviours with his overall management approach. When it came to planning, for instance he comments...*Planning for contract work that is in front of me. (SBOM3:1Q6)* Note: this quotation was coded as 'Planning behaviour' which is one of the four dimensions of time-management behaviour.

Informal: There were only a few staff in the office and informal discussions about up and coming events were the order of the day. He commented: *...so that if I require somebody to-do something on a particular day I will just mention it in passing... (SBOM7:3Q3)* Note: this quotation was coded as 'Executive behaviour' which is one of the four dimensions of time-management behaviour.

Pragmatic: SBOM6 is pragmatic: *Doing things that need to be done is what I want to do. (SBOM6:1Q4)* He was also aware of the importance of filling in gaps related to work task rather than having to employ too many staff. Note: this quotation was also coded as 'Personal Influence' which is one of the coding categories which addresses the first research question.

Flexible: SBOM10 disciplined approach to project management processes enabled her to be discretionary with much of her time: *Family is close and the work is very flexible. (SBOM10:1Q3)* Note: this quotation was also coded as 'Consequence' which is one of the principal coding categories which addresses the third research question.

These examples of the five emerging themes demonstrate that different time-management behaviours, influences and consequences have varying levels of importance for different SBOMs.

3.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Key ethical considerations that defined and enabled the relationship for this qualitative research about SBOMs were informed consent and confidentiality, which helped build participant trust.

Introduction to the participant: A letter of introduction explaining the aims of the research and providing participants with the ability to contact the researcher for more information was sent to all participants.

Informed consent: The issue of informed consent can be addressed by giving participants verbal and written information about the aims and development of the research (Vivar et al., 2007). It was essential for developing a relationship with the SBOMs and a perception of fair play to ensure that the SBOMs were fully cognisant of the purpose and use of the interview data to be gathered. Participation in in-depth interviews was voluntary. All information concerning the researcher contacts was provided, and the process by which participants could raise concerns with the University was clearly identified.

Confidentiality: The collection of data was confidential at all levels of this research. The research process also complied with the requirements of the Ethics Committee at the University of Wollongong, and the participants understood that all comments and behaviours would remain confidential (Silverman, 2009, p. 323). Managers were asked to provide some information about their work and their time-management behaviours, as well as information about factors that influenced these behaviours. There was only one instance where the questions proved problematic for one of the participants, and stringent efforts were made to reassure the participant that the information was only going to be used for research purposes. This satisfied the participant's apprehension about confidentiality.

Participants were asked to do the following:

- a) After an initial discussion and outline of the research project, to sign an agreement to participate in the research.

- b) To undertake an initial semi-structured interview. Some of the questions were pre-determined and the interviews were recorded with the permission of the participant.
- c) After the first interview, to reflect on their time-management behaviours and discuss them at the following interview.
- d) To complete a time log for three to five days between the first and second interviews. Participants were given a hard copy of a blank time log, and were also provided with an electronic copy if they chose. A number of participants used their own electronic version of the time log that fitted better into their existing time-management regimen. It was observed that these were either “off the shelf” electronic calendars or specialised calendars that had been tailor-made to suit their working environments.
- e) To undertake a second semi-structured interview where entries into the time logs were used as a basis for interviewer questions and clarifications. Some questions were pre-determined, but the majority were generated from the time logs and general dialogue that accompanied the discussion about particular work-related events such as meetings with staff or clients.
- f) To undertake a third semi-structured interview along the same lines as the previous interviews.

Other ethical considerations: The pilot set of interviews was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the qualitative approach used in this research, which focused on in-depth interviews supported by time logs. This also provided an opportunity to ensure that the participants were likely to understand the aims and objectives of the research.

3.13 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 3

An exploration, by its nature, is about entering into the realm of the unknown. This exploration entered into the busy and sometimes frantic world of the SBOM. While there is a plethora of research about every facet of small business, research into

SBOMs' time-management behaviours is noticeably lacking. This has provided an opportunity for this thesis that was best pursued, it is argued, using a qualitative research framework. Under this framework a case-study methodology was chosen, as it enabled substantial in-depth analysis of the SBOM research participants and their perspectives by means of a series of semi-structured, in-depth, qualitative interviews. The three interviews with each participant were supported by documentation in the form of time logs completed by each SBOM participant. The second and third interviews provided an opportunity for the participants to expand on and clarify comments that had been made at the previous interviews and to provide valuable feedback to the interviewer.

Claessens et al.'s (2009) four dimensions of time-management behaviour, which was used throughout this research, provides a broad framework with which to examine the literature. It also provides a framework with which to explore and analyse time-management behaviour in the context of the SBOM. The next chapter presents the analysis of the interview data, the time logs and the feedback from the three sets of interviews with each participant. Common themes emerged across the data that confirm the importance of time management in the context of small business, as well as the influences that affect those behaviours and the consequences that resulted from them.

4 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the 10 case studies around which this research is based. Each case represents a separate SBOM. A standardised format was used to analyse each of the case studies. It begins with an overview of the particular SBOM, followed by a descriptive analysis of the SBOM's time-management behaviours, influences and consequences associated with those behaviours. For each case study, the overview is designed to provide a snapshot of each SBOM's work and potential challenges surrounding their time-management behaviours.

The descriptive analysis of the time-management behaviours in each case study uses the construct put forth by Claessens et al. (2009) in which time management is broken down into four principal dimensions of behaviour: time assessment, planning, monitoring and executive. The study then proceeds to examine the influences that affect the SBOMs' time-management behaviours. Two groups of influences are examined: the SBOMs' personal and environmental influences. The consequences of SBOMs' time-management behaviours are also examined. Each case study includes summaries of the SBOM's time-management behaviours, the influences on them and the consequences that resulted from them. SBOMs were chosen according to whether they had at least 10 years' experience as an owner-manager/partner in a small business in Australia (Refer to table 3.1).

4.1.1 The coding process

The four stages of the coding process used for this research, outlined in Chapter 3, relate to the fourth stage of O'Leary's (2005, p. 229) nine stages. Coding and was supported by the use of NVivo (see Section 3.9.3, p. 65-69). Table 4.1 below outlines the principal coding categories, as they relate to the three research questions. These coding categories focus on time-management behaviours, influences and consequences and are dealt with in the ten case studies. After each case study, a table is presented which illustrates how each of the quotations has

been coded and how the five emerging themes are related to those coded quotations. Although this research does not attempt to suggest a causal relationship between time-management behaviours, influences, consequences and the five emerging themes, the evidence suggests that these emerging themes, which represent the individualisation of SBOMs' time management behaviours, provide a new lens with which to view time management in the small-business context.

Table 4.1: Coding of time-management behaviours, influences and consequences

| Time-management behaviours | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Planning Behaviours (PB) | Monitoring Behaviours (MB) | Executive Behaviours (EB) | Time Assessment Behaviours (AB) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal setting (Gs) • Prioritising (Prior) • Organising (Org) • Scheduling (Sched) • Strategic planning (SP) • Project planning (Pp) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During Activity (Da) • Post Activity (Pa) • Decision Making (Dec) • Project monitoring (Proj) • Technology use (Tec) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegation (Del) • Multi-tasking (Multi) • Developing people (Dev) • Proactive/Reactive Actions (Pro) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time estimation (Te) • Measuring work time accurately (Mta) • Planning vs reality (Pvr) • How time should be spent (Mts) |
| Influences and Consequences | | | |
| Personal Influences (PI) | Environmental Influences (EI) | Consequences (Cons) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality (Pers) • Polychronic (Poly) • Monochronic (Mono) • Procrastination (Procras) • Work preferences (Wkpref) • Long term goals (Ltg) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/team issues (Team) • Structure (Str) • Life cycle (Lifec) • Size (Size) • Competitors (Comp) • Customers (Cust) • Technology use (Tec) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity/performance (Prod) • Work life balance (Wlb) • Stress reduction (Stress) • Discretionary time (Disc) | |

4.1.2 Time logs

Time logs were completed by each of the ten SBOMs who participated in this study. The time logs were completed by participants after the first interview and, in the majority of cases, were the subject of reflection and follow up discussion during the second round of interviews. The purpose of the time logs was twofold. Firstly, they were designed to enable the SBOMs to reflect on the reality of their time usage, given there was a discussion about their time usage during the first interview. Secondly, they provided a useful way for the researcher to follow up and find out more about how SBOMs set their priorities and how they reacted to events throughout the days that they recorded.

Discussions surrounding the completed time logs were mostly integrated into the second interviews. Two of the participants had not completed the time logs by the second interview and the questions about their time logs were integrated into the third interviews. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed the researcher to work through the time logs with the SBOM in-situ during the interviews. Typical questions surrounding the time logs were e.g. *“at 2.45 pm on Thursday, you indicated that you had a meeting with your employees about, Why was it important that you were there?”* Other types of follow up questions included, *“You spent some time responding to emails and phone calls, is this a regular occurrence in your work days?”*

Overall, the data which was/were generated from the time logs, was a useful adjunct to the interviews and helped the researcher ascertain the kinds of time related activities and decisions that occupied the work of SBOMs. The data which the time logs generated was a useful stimulus for discussion and the SBOMs' reflections on the time logs are reported in the discussion of the interviews below. Examples of time logs are provided in Appendix Three.

4.1.3 Case study interviews, venues and duration

Then interviews were held at a variety of venues which depended on the availability and location of the SBOMs at the time. Table 4.2 sets out the venues and the duration of the interviews. Part of working with SBOMs is the recognition that they are often working ‘on the run’ and interviews were conducted, when the opportunity arose and it was convenient for them to participate.

Table 4.2: Interview venues and duration

| | Interview 1 | | Interview 2 | | Interview 3 | |
|---------------|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| SBOM | Venue | Time (mins) | Venue | Time (mins) | Venue | Time (mins) |
| SBOM1 | Outside a conference venue | 45 | Workplace office | 42 | Breakfast meeting (restaurant) | 55 |
| SBOM2 | Workplace office | 33 | Workplace office | 32 | Workplace office | 36 |
| SBOM3 | Workplace office | 22 | Workplace office | 25 | Workplace office | 29 |
| SBOM4 | Skype to USA (hotel) | 28 | Skype to USA (hotel) | 32 | Skype to USA (hotel) | 34 |
| SBOM5 | SBOM’s home office | 42 | SBOM’s home office | 45 | SBOM’s home office | 41 |
| SBOM6 | SBOMs residence | 46 | Workshop | 54 | My home office | 39 |
| SBOM7 | Workplace office | 38 | Workplace office | 52 | Workplace office | 53 |
| SBOM8 | Workplace office | 40 | Workplace office | 69 | Workplace office | 53 |
| SBOM9 | Skype to workplace office | 39 | Skype to workplace office | 42 | Skype to workplace office | 44 |
| SBOM10 | Workplace office | 50 | Café | 29 | Workplace office | 37 |

4.2 CASE STUDY 1

SBOM1: OWNER-MANAGER OF A MANUFACTURING COMPANY

4.2.1 Overview

At the time of the interviews, SBOM1 was the owner/director of a consultancy firm specialising in continuous-improvement processes and methodologies for the manufacturing industry in Australia and Southeast Asia. He was the founder of the business and since its inception had been solely responsible for the generation of its intellectual property and the updating of course materials required for his training courses and consultancy programs. The business had been running for 16 years, and had grown steadily during that period. SBOM1 could be described as a “hands-on” owner/director, as he participated in most of the activities in which the business was involved. The business employed 12 people, including both office staff and consultants.

The consultants who reported to SBOM1 were responsible for business development and income generation in different regions within Australia and overseas. These consultants regularly reported to SBOM1, and only occasionally visited the central office for such activities as annual planning sessions and performance reviews. There were five full-time office staff: SBOM1’s wife and daughter, and three other staff members. Each office staff member had multiple roles such as office administration, booking venues and preparing folders for training courses. All these roles directly supported the work of SBOM1. Recently, a long-serving and reliable consultant had been appointed to the role of state regional manager for Victoria. A franchise arrangement was put in place that enabled the newly appointed manager to have much more autonomy in his role.

SBOM1 saw his own role as multifaceted, and used terms such as “selling the business” “creating a marketplace,” “doing the marketing,” and “doing the delivery of the service training”, and included “the monitoring of clients” and “working with clients”. He also included “technical updating”. (*SBOM1:1Q1*)

SBOM1's work patterns were irregular, as he often travelled interstate or overseas to facilitate consulting workshops in which he played a pivotal role as facilitator.

Three interviews were held with SBOM1 over a six-week period. The first interview took place outside a corporate training venue in a hotel, where SBOM1 had completed the first of five days of a continuous-improvement training program focusing on leadership. The second interview took place in SBOM1's office and the third interview took place as a breakfast meeting at a restaurant on SBOM1's way to work. SBOM1 referred to time management as:

Its recognising that time's a, you know, a finite thing that we have, we've only got x number of seconds a day and as soon as you lose something you've wasted it forever. So how do you get maximum value out of life? (SBOM1:1Q2)

4.2.2 SBOM1's time-management behaviours

4.2.2.1 Time-assessment behaviours

SBOM1 undertook business-related activity most days of the week and would regularly use parts of weekends to develop course materials as well as write proposals for continuing or prospective clients. SBOM1 reported that he spent between 60 and 70 hours per week on work-related activities. The course materials were designed to be used by all the employed consultants in the delivery of their training/consulting product throughout Australia.

SBOM1 reflected that, although circumstances were beyond his control, he wanted to spend more time in a selling role, but admitted that he became drawn back into the operational and administration side of the business. He commented:

Ideally I should be spending probably 90% of my time selling and...the reality is that I am spending only 10 to 20% of my time selling. (SBOM1:11Q3)

The time log that SBOM1 completed also bore this out, as it was filled with appointments and internal administration as well as some time put towards the development of more training materials. He admitted that:

I should be spending my time on marketing.... I still get bogged down with the technical stuff. (SBOM1:11Q4)

The time log also reinforced the fact that there are few people who can run “public workshops”, and the onus of much of this work came back to SBOM1.

4.2.2.2 Planning behaviours

On a day-to-day basis, SBOM1 used an electronic diary to both prioritise and record events. The diary was mainly used to remind him of the work tasks or activities that he had committed himself to; in relation to this he said:

I keep a diary of all my appointments in Outlook and on the phone so I know where I am and what I'm doing. And I keep a running log book of every conversation I have with people so I know what is being said and when and [date] it so I can always refer back to it. (SBOM1:1Q5)

SBOM1 used a to-do list for his action planning to ensure that everything that he wanted to get done was recorded. In relation to this he stated:

Um, I'll have an action plan for each day. Like things I've got to action, [a] list of things – I want to get this, this and this done. Um, I always have one of those going when I'm not, like, running a workshop, but when I'm in the office. Uh, I'll either, uh, the afternoon before or first thing in the morning, make sure I know, okay, what have I to try and tick off. Um, and have a rough priority on it and then, um, follow that. (SBOM1:1Q6)

During the interview with SBOM1, his phone rang several times and some of those calls caused interruptions to the interviews when SBOM1 chose to take those calls. In later discussions with SBOM1, it was revealed that this kind of interruption was a usual and an expected part of his work day. Being aware of this constant interruption to work flow, SBOM1 always took notes during the conversations, as I witnessed during our interviews:

During the conversation. I try to always log whenever I someone rings me on the phone, I take notes so I have a record of what I'm saying or what the key

points are or what actions I have to take. I have a client, a potential client summary sheet which I use, uh, to, uh, plan out my follow-ups to people. So, yeah, I use diaries a fair bit. (SBOM1:3Q1)

The volume of work that SBOM1 was involved with challenged him when it came to planning. SBOM1 was personally involved in a broad range of activities that extended into his weekends. I observed that much of his work was entered into his diary. The diary acted as a task list, yet on weekends when he came to work, he paid little attention to monitoring the time that the activities took. SBOM1 also pointed out that distractions caused activities to take longer than planned. He stated:

It probably takes me longer to get things done than I plan for it to; often that's because I get distracted. The past weekends were really jammed where I had to get these workshops done and a paper finished. I tried to get it done by the Saturday but you get distracted where, oh, we've got to go and take the dogs for a walk, or we've got to go and go for a bike ride, or we've got to go and do, and the trouble is not so much, "No, piss off, I've just got to focus on this, so you go and do all those activities with the family," which is important, but then the whole thing takes longer to do because then you decide to have lunch and a glass of wine and then you slow down for the rest of the time. (SBOM1:3Q2)

These comments from SBOM1 suggest a relationship between time-assessment behaviour and planning, where it appears that in this context, frequent distractions caused accurate time assessment to be permanently unachievable.

4.2.2.3 Monitoring behaviours

SBOM1 made frequent references in the interviews to the difficulties he faced when trying to monitor and control his time-management behaviour. His personal admission that he was not spending the right amount of time on the activities that he had prioritised was not a new phenomenon, as he appeared to be reconciled to not being able to complete these activities in the times that he had scheduled. The scheduled times appeared in his electronic diary as in the time log. Most of these

activities were reactive responses to phone calls, requests for updated training manuals, discussions with consultants or client follow-up whereas the original diary entries were mainly meetings.

Much of the monitoring of time took place after the event, and it was looked on as a failure to achieve the plan:

I would say it'd have to be well over 50%. I guess our business target we always look at is [that SBOM1] should be spending something like 80% of his time on customers. Probably I don't spend as much as that, but probably somewhere between 50 and 80. (SBOM1:3Q3)

4.2.2.4 Executive behaviours

SBOM1's days were very full of work-related activity that required his personal attention and involvement. Several examples of executive behaviour, which involved strategically planning his time, emerged. The issue that emerged was that SBOM1, while realising the importance of delegation, also recognised that he had difficulty in delegating tasks where he felt the employee could not meet his expected standards. The old adage "If you want it done properly, do it yourself" came into play:

We certainly delegate some activities to employees, but certain activities, we haven't skilled our people up on or our people are not good enough.... (SBOM1:2Q1)

SBOM1 summed up his multitasking in reference to a day when he was simultaneously running a workshop and attending to business matters:

....you're keeping an eye on the business while you're doing this stuff.... Most of the time you are always thinking about the business because you are always in between breaks.... (SBOM1:2Q2)

Delegation, in the view of SBOM1, depended on the readiness and capability of other staff to take up the delegated roles. SBOM1 expressed his frustration at not being able to find suitable staff to fill some of the roles:

It's very hard to get someone – to get other people to sell professional services. I've tried to get other people to do it and it's very, very hard to get someone to be good at selling, uh, professional services unless they're actually good at delivering professional services. (SBOM1:2Q3)

In regards to delegation, his expectations of his staff were onerous and he found it difficult to find and attract staff with the range of skills to fulfil his expectations. He stated:

I guess our learning has been to develop someone who can go out and sell. They really need to – they need to be able to, first of all, deliver the stuff with a client; secondly, go out and run public workshops, so they [need to] understand how to interact with the public; and thirdly, go out and sell. And that transition can take three or four years, if not five. (SBOM1:2Q4)

This meant that unless SBOM1 found the right staff and put the time into coaching and mentoring them, he would still carry much of the workload.

Another executive behaviour SBOM1 displayed was his economical use of travelling time. He travelled regularly interstate and overseas for work; it took him approximately 1.5 hours each way to get to the airport. He made a conscious choice to use an airport limousine service for these trips as it enabled him to spend the travelling time either doing work or catching up with clients on the phone:

So I'll get on the phone and talk to someone, that's why I get driven around so I can actually work on the laptop while I'm driving. (SBOM1:3Q4)

Overall, SBOM1's executive behaviours helped him to minimise wasted time and ensure that the customers' changing needs were met.

Table 4.3: Summary of SBOM1's time-management behaviours

| Time-management behaviour type | Key behaviours |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Time assessment</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong awareness of the time he needed to spend on activities - Getting through a heavy workload was more important than accurately assessing how long it would take |
| <i>Planning</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daily to-do lists used as a task reminder - Use of electronic diary to prioritise and schedule - Planning mostly in the form of strategic planning |
| <i>Monitoring</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aware of the need to spend considerable time on editing course materials - Reconciled to using this time despite its cutting into weekends and personal time - Flexible with hours worked depending on workload - Monitoring gave way to the urgency of completing tasks in any time frame |
| <i>Executive</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Used travelling time for work related issues - Meetings mainly held as teleconferences - Delegation of key roles to other employees such as consultants - Regular time in office for preparation and strategy while other staff were not there |

4.2.3 Influences and consequences relating to SBOM1's time-management behaviours

4.2.3.1 Personal influences and preferences

SBOM1 showed a high level of personal involvement preparing the training courses that he presented. This was particularly evident in relation to editing and updating course materials. The time logs testified to this as well. The following account of a usual work week summed up his personal approach to work and time:

I've just gone through the busy period, which is a massive amount of work leading up to it in writing papers. And I've been in New Zealand all last week, so I had four, five days in New Zealand, basically. I went over Monday night. Coming back, and I had to write a half-day instructor's, or three-hour instructor's update, write a half-day workshop of something with totally new materials [and] new case studies and prepare a paper, get all that done and then go and deliver the update on the Monday night, do the forum on the Tuesday, give my paper, run the workshop on the Wednesday – so it's been pretty full on for the last couple of weeks. (SBOM1:2Q5)

His attention to detail and his need to work long and hard were part of his personal makeup and caused him to be fully occupied while at work. There was little or no evidence of procrastination. There was evidence of lack of delegation, as he found it difficult to share his work with his staff or work colleagues. The overload of work also caused deadline rush, and there appeared to be constant polychronic activity.

SBOM1 also reflected that he was a perfectionist:

I guess one of my weaknesses is that I am a bit of a perfectionist, or I'd like to have things in good quality. (SBOM1:1Q6)

This perfectionism affected SBOM1's time usage:

I'll take the time to redo things right so they will be presented correctly. (SBOM1:1Q7)

Again, the preference for detail had a strong impact on time usage:

Yeah, I think sometimes, because I like detail, so therefore every now and then I'll get something and I'll go, "Shit that's not right," so instead of leaving it I'll spend 15 minutes or something on it making it right and making it look proper so I can then handle it. (SBOM1:3Q5)

Personal expectations and high standards were critical for SBOM1; this became apparent in the three interviews with comments such as:

It comes back to the expectations you set on yourself as to saying, "How do I want to do something, and do I want to do it right?" I guess one of my weaknesses is that I am a bit of a perfectionist.... but I'll take the time to redo things right so they will be presented correctly. (SBOM1:1Q8)

4.2.3.2 Environmental influences

Developing new customer bases was a major, time-consuming challenge for SBOM1. The strongest influences affecting SBOM1's time-management behaviours were, first, the need to keep the business afloat by attracting new customers ("So it's a balance between servicing existing clients and trying to get new clients") and the need to satisfy customer needs and demand ("So, during that time frame if there is an urgent request from a client you need to respond or try to respond") (SBOM1:2Q6).

These customer influences affected SBOM1's time management, particularly the prioritising and scheduling of events as customers' needs took precedence over other activities he may have wished to pursue.

Table 4.4: Summary of the influences on SBOM1's time-management behaviours

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Personal influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong attention to detail - Polychronic work style and deadline rush evident - Need to be personally involved in a range of activities including consulting, course design, development and meeting with clients - Driven by a long term goal to help improve the manufacturing industry in Australia |
| <i>Environmental influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business survival and growth – more skewed towards survival when interviewed - Planning mostly in the form of strategic planning and planning for specific projects - Use of electronic diary to prioritise and schedule - Support staff worked with SBOM1 to assist with his deadlines |

4.2.3.3 Consequences

SBOM1's productivity depended on his ability to prioritise and focus on value-adding activity. His perceived need to be personally involved in highly detailed and technical writing, the preparation of presentations and tenders along with client liaison, meant that he was always confronted with a great deal of ongoing work.

His work-life balance was an ongoing challenge: often he would come into work on weekends to do work that had not been completed during the week. This was frequently as a result of the need to react to customer opportunities in which only he could be involved. He did not appear to be stressed, as his life and work blended into one. His capacity for long hours and hard work made him resilient to being stressed. It was difficult to determine how he used his discretionary time, but it appeared that there was so much work to attend to personally that SBOM1 used discretion in terms of prioritising work and not creating time opportunities for non-work-related activities.

Table 4.5: Summary of the consequences of SBOM1's time-management behaviours

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| <i>Consequences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Work-life balance skewed towards work- Motivated by performance and productivity, which were enhanced by rigorous prioritisation- Showed little stress for the amount of work involved- Uses discretionary time to concentrate on manual writing |
|---------------------|---|

Table 4.6: Linking ‘Case Study 1’ quotations to 5 emergent themes

| Quotes | Codes | Emerging themes |
|--------|--------------------|---|
| 1.1:Q1 | Background | <p><u>Examples of the five emerging themes:</u></p> <p>Personal preferences: SBOM1’s high attention to detail and his personal involvement in updating documentation as evidenced in his comments about: <i>...getting bogged down in technical stuff. (SBOM1:11Q4)</i></p> <p>Integrated: SBOM1 integrated leisure activities (e.g. being at home and walking the dogs) with: <i>...writing papers and preparing workshops. (SBOM1:3Q2)</i></p> <p>Informal: SBOM1’s formal approach to writing to-do lists was balanced by his informal and flexible way of sticking to those lists. <i>(SBOM1:1Q6)</i></p> <p>Pragmatic: SBOM1’s pragmatism showed itself in the way he checked client requirements, planned his presentations and then delivered them. <i>(SBOM1:2Q5)</i></p> <p>Flexible: SBOM1’s ‘average day’ was an exercise in flexibility as is evidenced by his reactive responses to phone calls which sometimes forced him to significantly steer away from his planned work. <i>(SBOM1:3Q1)</i></p> |
| 1.1:Q2 | TA (Mtd) | |
| 1.1:Q3 | TA (Mtd) | |
| 1.1:Q4 | TA (Mtd) | |
| 1.1:Q5 | P (Sched) | |
| 1.1:Q6 | P (Org) | |
| 1.1:Q7 | PI (Pers) | |
| 1.1:Q8 | PI (Pers) | |
| 1.1:Q9 | PI (Pers) | |
| 1.2:Q1 | E (Del) | |
| 1.2:Q2 | E (Multi) | |
| 1.2:Q3 | E (Del) | |
| 1.2:Q4 | E (Dev) | |
| 1.2:Q5 | PI (Busy) | |
| 1.2:Q6 | EI (Cust) | |
| 1.3:Q1 | M (Da) | |
| 1.3:Q2 | TA (Pvr) | |
| 1.3:Q3 | M (Pa) TA (Pvr) | |
| 1.3:Q4 | E (Multi) | |
| 1.3:Q5 | PI (Pers) | |

4.3 CASE STUDY 2

SBOM2: OWNER-MANAGER OF A GRAPHIC-ARTS FIRM

4.3.1 Overview

At the time of the interview, SBOM2 was the owner-manager of a small graphic-arts firm. The business provided a range of services associated with branding, graphic designing and staging sets. SBOM2 had worked in the business for around 32 years, having taken over from his father approximately 15 years before. Although only in his early fifties, he was already talking about his own transition from the direct responsibilities of managing the business to a form of semi-retirement. The business employed 11 full-time staff and some casuals, as required, for specific projects.

Three interviews were held with SBOM2 over an eight-week period. The interviews took place in SBOM2's office, which was located in an office section above the ground floor of a studio workshop, close to a major urban centre. In all the discussions with SBOM2, it was clear that he had a strong grasp of all facets of the business and that he was very much aware of his present position in the business as well as where he wanted to be in the future.

SBOM2 had positioned himself to be a specialist in the business. He had actively moved away from the everyday operational and management issues and focused his time on areas that enabled him to use his expertise in his areas of interest. He stated:

The areas that I really look after are what's loosely called art direction of projects, so I look after the art of those projects, uh, and that can sometimes be arty and sometimes just be straight logistics or practicalities, um, of sorting out. (SBOM2:1Q1)

SBOM2 also adopted a "fill-in" role when some employees in the business were absent. This enabled him to stay in touch with the business, while keeping costs

down. SBOM2 had, in recent times, employed a general manager, so that in his words:

So I don't do the general management. (SBOM2:1Q2)

When asked about managing the business, he commented:

I don't have any sense that I lead it other than, um, I try to control the way everything looks. So I walk round and say, "No I'm not happy with that" and "We need to redesign that..." (SBOM2:1Q3)

SBOM2 adopted a largely "hands-off" manager/leader role and delegated most of the managerial and supervisory tasks in the business. He took a keen interest in what was going on, but had structured the business so that its everyday running went on without his direct involvement. His personal goal was to slowly move out of the core business-management role and to concentrate on activity that he was personally interested in and which required his specialist skills. He was in the process of developing structures that would facilitate an eventual transition from his current level of involvement to a future state of less involvement. In his words:

I mean, the long-term goal of retiring and having enough money to retire, I've spent quite a bit of time working on that, putting a structure in place so that I can get out. I've spent quite a bit of time on that and probably quite a bit of money, though I haven't seen the bills. So that's pretty important. And I've been working on that for five years, and it'll be five years before I can start to put away so we should have, in 12 months' time we should have a very different structure in place. (SBOM2:1Q4)

4.3.2 SBOM2's time-management behaviours

4.3.2.1 Time-assessment behaviours

When asked about the amount of time he spends at work, SBOM2 replied:

I essentially work 10 to 12 hours a day, but, generally speaking, don't work on the weekends. (SBOM2:1Q5)

Most days he worked at the office; therefore he was able to validate this statement. He asserted that his experience and a gut feeling helped him to assess the times that meetings took at work:

Well, it's historical, I guess. Historical. Most normal meetings I allow an hour for, I put them at hourly intervals so that I can do the meeting and perhaps do some follow-up work on that immediately before I go to my next one. So that seems to work, and I've been doing it for a while. I've been in this position a while so that seems to work. I suppose, yeah, I'd say it's just some kind of history and then if it hasn't been done before, which is often the case, then it's just a gut feeling for how long I should allow for that. (SBOM2:1Q6)

When requested to complete the time log as part of this research, SBOM2 completed an electronic version. This was really an extension of his normal work flow, as I observed that he kept and frequently referred to an ongoing electronic diary on his computer. His approach to time assessment could be summed up in the comment:

I think my clients are in control of my time, yeah. (SBOM2:1Q7)

This was evident in his time log, as most of the entries were either deadlines or meetings with clients or internal staff. The amount of time he spent on actual tasks depended on the value he placed on the client:

But I can decide how much work I put into it, I can just guess it, I can spend 15 minutes looking at it and say, "Well how much money did they spend last year?" (SBOM2:2Q1)

The estimation of time proved to be difficult for SBOM2, as the time that new projects would take was often unknown. In this regard, he stated:

And you know, and just sort of go, oh you know, X. I'd rather work it out but it could take me four to six hours to work it out properly and they want it by, if they want it by 2 o'clock it just can't be done that way. (SBOM2:2Q2)

And he summed up the ongoing difficulties with time assessment:

I've got this feeling that if I actually put a time frame next to some of those items, because some things you just think they're going to take forever, but in reality they're going to take five minutes or less, and you don't do them because perhaps it might be a bit difficult to do. (SBOM2:3Q1)

4.3.2.2 Planning behaviours

For SBOM2, as reflected in the previous section on assessment, planning was triggered by major commitments and deadlines. These major commitments were diarised electronically and were referred to regularly to ensure there were no major crises in terms of meeting deadlines. He described his planning approach as follows:

I couldn't have got to where I am without some form of planning, but it probably just happens in a slightly different kind of "arty-farty" kind of way. (SBOM2:1Q8)

When it came to the typical time-management list, again SBOM2 approached it in his own way. He made several comments about his use of to-do lists:

Yeah, I run, I guess, to-do lists, which is basically just a list in Excel where I keep moving the projects up and down the list and adding them and subtracting them. I suppose that's managing my time. And a diary which tells me when to go to appointments and whatnot.... (SBOM2:2Q3)

His comments about multiple tasks gave some insight:

Look, I've got 10 things to do today so, if I can get that within the 10 hours, I have to have done half of it by midday. Otherwise I'm going to push it. So I'll basically slice it up into portions and then try and fit it in. But obviously when there's more projects to be done than the time available, then I just have to put them in order of priority and [accept] what damage is done by leaving them to the bottom of the pile. (SBOM2:2Q4)

As a general practice, SBOM2 did not put his to-do lists in his electronic calendar, as this was reserved for major events. The to-do lists were entered into a separate electronic spread sheet. He explained:

I have a to-do list which occasionally I'll cut and paste, very occasionally will cut – well, when timelines are getting really short. Occasionally, if I'm really pushed for time, I will start cutting and pasting my to-do list into my diary. Inevitably I'm over-optimistic because I'm short of time, I know I'm short of time and I'm trying to squeeze things in. And if I do that inevitably I'm over-optimistic by about 50%. I normally only achieve, if I had a day where I thought I had to-do 15 things I'd probably only get to seven of them. (SBOM2:2Q5)

SBOM2's approach to 'to-do lists' was summed up in this comment:

...if you leave it long enough, they all [tasks] progress to that location [the to-do list]. Yes, I have to put things in my to-do list or put them in my diary. I don't use, which is a bit odd, I don't use the to-do list in the diary. I run a special spreadsheet, because...that same spreadsheet that [contains] my to-do list has my projects, and it has the tasks that I need to complete in those projects. So if I don't keep them together, so I'm a little frustrated by the fact that I've got a diary, I've got a to-do list and then the other thing that I have is a schedule where I'm controlling the production work, or the production employees of the work that I manage. So I find that [the tasks are] in three places so it's a bit annoying sometimes. I might actually, when I go to make an appointment, I at least need to look in two places. I need to look in my production schedule and I need to look in my diary to make an appointment. (SBOM2:2Q6)

And at the end of the day:

It possibly leaves me a bit disappointed at the end of the day but it puts them [tasks] in order. My to-do list is in order of priority so I guess, you know, balancing the important and the urgent and I will put them in order of

whatever. Urgent might come before important if I think important can wait till after urgent. (SBOM2:2Q7)

Overall SBOM2's main focus was getting the jobs to which he had committed himself done on time, and spreadsheets and diary entries were used pragmatically. He summed his process up by saying:

If it's starting to get really complicated, then I'll put it in a spreadsheet so that I know certain tasks have to be completed by certain days. (SBOM2:2Q8)

4.3.2.3 Monitoring behaviours

SBOM2's monitoring behaviours were difficult to determine, as monitoring depends largely on the expected time that activity will take based on planning. The often reactive environment in which SBOM2 found himself meant that he was constantly "tracking" his time usage and refocusing his time on where the main action lay. This comment summed up SBOM2's reaction to receiving a request for a quote:

So I just received an email before you came in, an urgent request for a quote today for a job that's a major set-building. The job's been coming, we've been talking about it and now all of a sudden the drawings are on my computer, apparently, and they want a figure, they want a budget figure for, I don't know, I didn't read the rest of the email because I didn't have time. But I'm sort of going, "Well, all those things I wanted to-do today have now been pushed aside by one client, a very important client." (SBOM2:1Q9)

Monitoring of time for SBOM2 appeared to be something that happened either after the scheduled events or because a project or tender was due within a certain time period. He stated:

I don't monitor the time other than if I'm not making it through my to-do list. (SBOM2:3Q2)

4.3.2.4 Executive behaviours

SBOM2, who was aware of his specialist role in the business, planned his travelling time to maximise its value. He commented:

Ninety percent of my Sydney meetings, I probably attend...by train so that I can work whilst I am travelling, so I don't lose three hours. I can talk on the phone for three hours. (SBOM2:2Q9)

Yeah, yeah, and it allows me to work on my computer, which I - you can't really do while you're driving. (SBOM2:2Q10)

SBOM2 also attended meetings in an advisory capacity so that he had a specific input. This ensured that he could extract himself physically from a meeting and pursue other priorities. SBOM2 often delegated the meetings, as he did most of his general management duties, to his office manager. She took the role of a personal assistant as well as an office manager, and enabled SBOM2 to focus on his preferred project work. SBOM2 still wanted any of the remaining tasks to be taken over by someone else, as reflected in this comment:

There's a few small things on my desk which I shouldn't really have to deal with and I have to. It'd be good for me to have someone come and take them away for me, get the information that's required and take them away. That would probably be, I don't know if that's a personal assistant or somebody like that, but somebody, kind of, who could perhaps ready my mind and sort of go, rummage through my paperwork or my to-do list and say, "Why hasn't that moved ahead?" I sort of go, "Oh well, I haven't really just got to it but the answer's 27," and somebody could type it up and send it off to the client, I'd really appreciate it. (SBOM2:3Q3)

Table 4.7: Summary of SBOM2's time-management behaviours

| Time-management behaviour type | Key behaviours |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Time assessment</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aware of time usage - Aware of the time it takes to complete workshop tasks - Experience had given him a good grasp of the real time it takes to complete jobs and caused him to be careful in what he takes on - His time logs suggested he spent considerable time on a few major projects where his technical expertise was required |
| <i>Planning</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning was not formalised or written down - Scheduling of major activities in his electronic diary – other “discretionary time left blank” - Driven by commitments and deadlines |
| <i>Monitoring</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Used experience to estimate time and focused on one task at a time - Showed flexibility with work hours and worked on weekends and after hours to ensure projects were completed |
| <i>Executive</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delegation of all key roles to other employees a strong part of his work style - Attended meetings more as a spectator than a chairperson (informal role), which enabled him to know what was going on while not being tied down to the agenda - The desire to focus on activity that involved his expertise and interest meant that he created a work environment in which this could take place |

4.3.3 Influences and consequences relating to SBOM2's time-management behaviours

4.3.3.1 Personal influences

The strongest personal influence on SBOM2's time-management behaviours was his desire to focus his efforts on work that he was personally interested in that called upon his skill in the art direction of projects.

So, the areas that I really look after are what's loosely called art direction of projects, so I look after the art of those projects, uh, and that can sometimes be arty and sometimes just be straight logistics or practicalities, um, of sorting out. (SBOM2:1Q10)

The kinds of projects that SBOM2 spent his time on involved a high level of his personal expertise and a level of concentration that suited his detailed approach to this kind of work:

Because I can be a bit detail-orientated, if I don't have all the detail I won't sit down and do it. (SBOM2:1Q11)

He described himself as a perfectionist, but qualified this comment by emphasising his pragmatism in regard to the balance between perfection and delivering results to the client on time. Although he focused on some major technical parts of his projects, he was also interested in the big picture:

I'm a perfectionist about the big idea being right and I'm probably a lot looser about the detail, so I think if we're in the big picture doing the right thing the idea could be brought into light probably 10 different legitimate ways or more. So I'm not really concerned about which way it comes to fruition as long as the idea is still solid. (SBOM2:1Q12)

The consequence of the perfectionism and his attention to detail meant that SBOM2 heavily relied on other members of his workforce to be significantly involved in operational aspects of the business. Also, he considered himself to have

a “laissez faire” management style, but this was highly dependent on his employees taking on a sizeable amount of responsibility and autonomy.

So I like people to be pretty autonomous here and make decisions. And that I guess might be, then, [that] I don't have to make those decisions. (SBOM2:1Q13)

The time logs revealed that SBOM2 focused on a few projects during any one day and thus his time management was based on eliminating distractions rather than cramming a great deal of activity into any one day. His creative approach to design meant that he was constantly thinking about projects in his waking hours, some of which went onto the back burner while he was working on other projects.

Yeah, you're never not thinking about projects, yeah, because some of them just, when you're trying to design something that's new and never been seen before it actually takes a bit of work to kind of filter all the rubbish out, get in it with a new, something that's relatively new. (SBOM2:1Q14)

He summed up his relation to work and life in the comments:

It kind of seems like there's a bit of a blur there between work and pleasure. (SBOM2:1Q15)

I don't know. I guess when you're a designer, kind of everything you do seems to evolve around, there seems to be a big crossover between personal and commercial. (SBM2:3Q4)

Both of these comments indicate that work took precedence over “pleasure”, as the nature of the work was unremitting and did not fit into a paradigm of time management that emphasises control and regulation.

As part of his personal goal, SBOM2 planned on gradually removing himself from the operational side of the business and spending more time in a consultative role, providing specialist expertise as and when required. This personal goal influenced

the time and effort he was prepared to put into expanding the business, and he said:

I mean the long-term goal of retiring and having enough money to retire, I've spent quite a bit of time working on that, putting a structure in place so that I can get out. (SBM2:3Q5)

In summary, SBOM2's personal management style, which he described as "laissez faire," his overwhelming interest in specialising in technical design, and the way he blended work with life, strongly influenced his approach to time management, which could be described as unstructured and client-driven.

4.3.3.2 Environmental influences

The environment within which SBOM2 operated ensured that he was able to continue his current work patterns; i.e. specialising in the technical aspects of the designs his company undertook. SBOM2 delegated much of his work to his colleagues and empowered them to make decisions and act independently, which meant that SBOM2 could deal directly with clients. He summarised:

Well, they [the clients] totally influence my day. (SBOM2:3Q6)

The strongest environmental influence on SBOM2 was the client with whom he dealt personally. At this stage of the business, clients came to SBOM2 for assistance, which meant he did not have to spend as much time involved in marketing or sales as other SBOMs, as he explained:

We're fortunate in that clients come to us. We're not chasing projects. I spend very little time chasing projects. (SBOM2:3Q7)

Clients also fitted into his timetable:

...most people, because they want me, are quite happy to fit in with me, so if they say "We'd like to see you," they normally say if they're in Sydney, they're just like, "I'd like to see you this week." (SBOM2:2Q11)

This enabled SBOM2 to cluster client meetings in Sydney with a range of his clients, and in many instances to manage his clients to fit into his own schedule. The inverse of this happened as deadlines for both projects and proposals that had strict deadlines emerged. Such instances caused deadline rush. Although clients gave him a great deal of flexibility in the technical side of projects, they also expected him to occasionally deliver with a very quick turn-around. The comments below illustrate the demands that were sometimes placed on SBOM2's time:

I put a major proposal in the other day. It was a job in Hobart, and I flew to Hobart for a meeting last Monday, and I submitted the design concept first on Friday. I didn't work on the design until Thursday evening, and everything that I worked on on Thursday evening I scrapped over breakfast on Friday morning and redrew and sent it in with that much thought. And then I kind of went, and then I panicked because I felt that I actually hadn't spent enough time on it. (SBOM2:1Q16)

The industry, in which SBOM2 operated, ran on tight deadlines despite the fact that SBOM2 was able to mostly work at his own pace.

Technology also enabled SBOM2 to work from home; this arrangement was also influenced by his plan to spend less time at work. He commented:

Yeah, yeah, and it allows me to work on my computer, which I – you can't really do while you're driving. (SBOM2:3Q8)

SBOM2 responded to emails as they arrived as, according to him, they often needed immediate attention:

I do understand that that's a common business practice to deal with emails at certain times in the day, but I find that they, I mean they – the emails are about jobs I'm working on now. And so I if I didn't look at them for about three hours or four hours it might actually stop me proceeding on the jobs I'm working on, because I'm waiting on answers minute by minute. (SBOM2:2Q12)

Table 4.8: Summary of the influences on SBOM2's time-management behaviours

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Personal influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong attention to detail - Perfectionist - Need to work on projects that highly interested him and involved his technical skills - Preference for working alone |
| <i>Environmental influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The business environment was stable allowing him to pursue his personal interests and personal approach to his project work - Was driven more by personal interest than growing the business - Very strong personal relationships and regular communication with customers |

4.3.3.3 Consequences

SBOM2 separated himself, as much as possible, from many of the mainstream activities of the business. His productivity and that of the business were two separate concerns. SBOM2's work schedule was kept on track partly by his administrative manager, who booked appointments for him, regularly updated his electronic calendar and ensured he kept appointments.

SBOM2 appeared to be satisfied with his work-life balance at the time of the interviews. His time management was influenced by his need to keep busy and keep on working. A comment that he made in the first interview revealed that his interest in work was so strong that, without work, he would be at a loss:

If I went home at 4 o'clock this afternoon I virtually wouldn't know what to do, like, I'd just go, I'd have to get my laptop out and continue to work.
(SBOM2:1Q17)

In regard to discretionary time, SBOM2 had spent considerable time repositioning himself in the business to be able to act in a semi-consulting role. It was at his

discretion to undertake projects that interested him, and this was what he wanted to do in the future.

Table 4.9: Summary of the consequences of SBOM2's time-management behaviours

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| <i>Consequences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Personal performance was based on output and not time spent. It was difficult to measure his productivity given he was the master of his own time.- Work and life blended into each other and he often worked from home- He perceived stress levels as low- Discretionary time was used to focus on specialist activity |
|----------------------------|--|

Table 4.10: Linking 'Case Study 2' quotations to 5 emergent themes

| Quotes | Codes | Emerging themes |
|---------|---------------------|--|
| 2.1:Q1 | PI (Pers) | <p>Examples of the five emerging themes:</p> <p>Personal preferences: SBOM2's strong interest in focusing on work that used his creative skills such as <i>art direction</i>. (SBOM2:Q1)</p> <p>Integrated: SBOM2 integrated work and life activities in such a way that he describes it as...<i>a bit of a blur between work and pleasure</i>. (SBOM2:Q1Q15)</p> <p>Informal: SBOM2's informal approach to management which is really avoidance which could be interpreted as a purposeful avoidance of 'general management' (SBOM2Q2).</p> <p>Pragmatic: SBOM2's practical approach to travelling means that he plans his time before he travels and uses public transport. <i>...It allows me to work on my computer...</i> (SBOM2:2Q10)</p> <p>Flexible: SBOM2's close relationships with customers meant that they were flexible with meetings and sometimes with deadlines: <i>...because they want me, are quite happy to fit in with me...</i>(2.2Q11)</p> |
| 2.1:Q2 | PI (Pers) | |
| 2.1:Q3 | Background | |
| 2.1:Q4 | PI (Ltg) | |
| 2.1:Q5 | TA (Te) (Mta) | |
| 2.1:Q6 | TA (Mta) | |
| 2.1:Q7 | E (Cont) | |
| 2.1:Q8 | P (Org) | |
| 2.1:Q9 | M (Da) | |
| 2.1:Q10 | PI (Pers) | |
| 2.1:Q11 | PI (Pers) | |
| 2.1:Q12 | PI (Pers) | |
| 2.1:Q13 | PI (Pers) | |
| 2.1:Q14 | EI (Obs) | |
| 2.1:Q15 | PI (Pers) C (Wlb) | |
| 2.1:Q16 | EI (Cust) | |
| 2.1:Q17 | C (Wlb) (Prod) | |
| 2.2:Q1 | TA (Mts) | |
| 2.2:Q2 | TA (Pvr) (Te) | |
| 2.2:Q3 | P (Sched) (Org) | |
| 2.2:Q4 | P (Org) (Prior) | |
| 2.2:Q5 | P (Sched) TA (Mta) | |
| 2.2:Q6 | P (Sched) (Prior) | |
| 2.2:Q7 | P (Prior) | |
| 2.2:Q8 | P (Prior) (Org) | |
| 2.2:Q9 | E (Multi) (Pro) | |
| 2.2:Q10 | E (Multi) C (Prod) | |
| 2.2:Q11 | PI (Pers) | |
| 2.3:Q1 | TA (Pvr) | |
| 2.3:Q2 | E (Del) | |
| 2.3:Q3 | E (Del) (Multi) | |
| 2.3:Q4 | PI (Wkpref) C (Wlb) | |
| 2.3:Q5 | PI (Ltg) | |
| 2.3:Q6 | EI (Cust) | |
| 2.3:Q7 | EI (Cust) | |
| 2.3:Q8 | M (Tec) | |

4.4 CASE STUDY 3

SBOM3: OWNER-MANAGER OF A SPECIALISED MACHINE PARTS COMPANY

4.4.1 Overview

At the time of the interview, SBOM3 was the owner and managing director of a steel-parts manufacturing business specialising in producing a range of steel and stainless-steel components. SBOM3 took over the business from his father and had worked in the business for approximately 15 years. Customers directly ordered these parts, which were then designed and milled accordingly. The customer base was wide and varied, ranging from large mines in Western Australia to small metal-working workshops in New South Wales. SBOM3 worked out of the reception/office area of an industrial machine shop that was part of a factory building. The office area, I observed, was freely accessible to the staff as well as the public.

Three interviews were held with SBOM3 over a six-week period; the final interview was postponed several times due to pressing work commitments. The three interviews were held at the SBOM3's workplace. There was some noise coming from the factory during the interview but nothing that impinged on either the clarity of the interview or the work that SBOM3 would undertake on any given day. I observed during the interviews that employees from the factory frequently entered the office requesting help or advice from the SBOM3 or his assistant.

SBOM3 played a hands-on role, when necessary, in the machine shop. His son worked alongside him in the business and had more of an operational role. SBOM3 did not appear to have many longer-term plans.

He described the main work activities as:

Right, well, the main activities are...quoting to customers, quoting work to them, that's probably primary one. The next major activity is, uh, making sure the accounts are okay, cash flow. So they're the two major activities.
(SBOM3:1Q1)

SBOM3 was a front-line manager who dealt with customers and took a leading role in ensuring that their needs were fulfilled. This involved dealing with technical staff directly, which explained why there was not much space between the main office at the front of the company and the factory behind the main office. He indicated that 90% of his time was spent in quoting for potential work. He also mentioned that he spent an average of 50 hours per week at work.

It was difficult to extrapolate from SBOM3 about his goals for the future. His comment in this regard was more about what a goal was rather than his actual goals:

Well, it's just goal-setting. You've got a goal that you want to meet in the future so you structure your operations to meet that goal in the future.
(SBOM3:1Q2)

It appeared that his current need to keep the business afloat caused him to think more in the short term than the long term. His comment supported this supposition:

Yeah, freeing up my time for strategic thoughts is a big issue here.
(SBOM3:1Q3)

4.4.2 SBOM3's time-management behaviours

SBOM3 completed the time logs for three separate days. The logs showed a constant pattern of daily activities on the three days. Work activities such as opening the mail, checking finances, meeting with suppliers, making phone calls and troubleshooting in the workshop were a regular part of each day.

SBOM3's work environment was relatively predictable in that his role and related time-management behaviours could be controlled to some extent. This environment reflected SBOM3's work ethos and expectations, and he appeared to be quite comfortable in this environment.

4.4.2.1 Time-assessment behaviours

SBOM3's time-assessment behaviours were largely formed by his work experience. Regular weekly events, such as working on business accounts, took up a fixed amount of time each week.

Accounts will probably take an hour a week, sometimes they will take longer depending on what, on what I have to do, if I've got to do an audit of the debtors or something or the creditors or something like that, or sort out a problem with the balance sheet – that could take anything up to a day or two. (SBOM3:1Q4)

The time for other planned work activities was calculated based on the outcome that was expected. This example illustrates how the time an activity took was based on the need to have had it done by a certain time. It also illustrates the link between time-assessment behaviours and planning behaviours such as scheduling:

Looking at it, you get a bit of an idea that it's going to take X amount of time – that you normally get a group of them together and say “well I've got to-do these today.” And you do the important ones first, and you basically block it out. There's some things you can do collectively, like you might be able to organise sub-contractors and....prices. So you do all that at once, and then you work on the stuff while that's all happening out there. You work on the stuff that you can do while you're waiting for the answers to come back. So that's, in the sense - that's the scheduling part of what you do, you know that some things are going to take some time, so you put them out there as early as you can, and you work on the bits that you can control. And when the answers come in from out there, you put them all in, and you send the package to your client. (SBOM3:1Q5)

4.4.2.2 Planning behaviours

SBOM3 was engaged in a range of short-term planning behaviours and used an electronic planner most of the time to keep on track with activities.

I find that best thing to do is just keep a list of tasks up in front of you. I find the electronic options are very handy for that. (SBOM3:2Q1)

SBOM3 used a computer to flag the occurrence of more important events:

I put tasks down in the computer. Somebody wants something done, well it's easier to put a, easier to flag it with a task and get onto it that way. At least you know it's always there and you can monitor or review it from time to time and...see, yeah, well, I need to, it's been a while since I've looked at that, I need to revisit that. That sort of how it goes. (SBOM3:2Q2)

In terms of planning for the future, the interview revealed that there was more of an emphasis on day-to-day rather than long-term goals:

No, it doesn't work like that. What I'm doing is I'm planning to contract work based on what's in front of me so, if the or, if I'm successful the order will come straight away, and we'll get on with it. It's passed off into the workshop, then I go on with the next bit of work. But what I think you might be alluding to is am I planning for the business to be in a certain place in time, in 1 month, 3 months and 6 months. Not especially, not in specific goals but I do have specific themes that I'm planning to work through the business. (SBOM3:1Q6)

In terms of using to-do lists in planning:

I rarely put them on paper except if I've got a specific thing that I have to do. (SBOM3:1Q7)

This was supported by the comment:

It's just on a need-to-act basis. That's how I operate. (SBOM3:2Q3)

In terms of prioritising for planning, customers clearly influenced the planning process. SBOM3 stated:

Making sure that you, as far as I'm concerned, as making sure that you attend to the vital things from the business first, important things second. And the rest of the time is devoted to the other issues. And the important things move

up and down on the scale. What's important today is not important in five minutes time when you get a phone call from the customer. (SBOM3:2Q4)

4.4.2.3 Monitoring behaviours

SBOM3's monitoring mainly aimed to ensure there was sufficient time, for example, to complete the submission of a tender to a client or a tailored manufacturing job for a client. His plan for the future was to have a business that runs itself.

Oh, the longer-term plan for the business is to have a self-sustaining operation that doesn't require any more than monitoring.... (SBOM3:2Q5)

4.4.2.4 Executive behaviours

In terms of executive time-management behaviours, SBOM3 actively delegated work to free up his own time. This delegation enabled SBOM3 to be involved in what he called the strategic part of the business.

I delegate the workshop planning, the workshop running, all the goods in and out, that's all someone else's responsibility. I don't get actually involved in that sort of thing, I just tend to stick with the most strategic ends of the business. (SBOM3:1Q8)

It's just on a need-to-act basis. That's how I operate. (SBOM3:1Q9)

I can delegate a whole lot of stuff, but then I'll get something that needs my personal attention and that stuffs my day. (SBOM3:1Q10)

Employees were empowered to deal with customers directly in regard to specifications and quality issues. This kind of delegation enabled SBOM3 to be less involved in areas that were better dealt with by those who worked on them directly. He explained:

It really depends. That's the sort of thing that, delivery times and stuff - that's all delegated. I don't know who does that. My people here, who I rely on to manage on time. The only thing that I'm really dealing with is the clinical

items.... Ones that they can't deal with or feel they shouldn't have to deal with. Or it might take someone at a level to talk to someone at a similar level in the other business..... But generally speaking, our relationships with our customers are never like that. Normally [my employees] go through normal channels and talk to people and get it sorted out. (SBOM3:3Q1)

SBOM3 adopted a problem-solving role, facilitator and ideas generator when all the usual channels did not lead to a resolution. He explained:

Most of the time I'm tucked away...all the time I'm doing my thing and everyone else is running the business around me. Sometimes I'll become involved in something and something rears its head, what I'll be doing is more or less joining the discussion on a facilitator basis. "Have you thought about this? Have you thought about that?" Sometimes maybe honing in on a critical idea and giving that importance and saying. "Let's build on that." (SBOM3:3Q2)

Part of the reason why SBOM3 was able to delegate was due to the relationships he had set up with his customers. These relationships had been built up over a long period of time with the support of employees who had well developed customer relationships. About those relationships, he commented:

You can get a look in somewhere, but it takes five years to build up an acceptable level of custom. (SBOM3:3Q3)

The reactivity of the business caused existing plans to be reprioritised; for instance, in this case where a customer required a quotation:

Sometimes you think you've got nothing on and you can plan a project for the day, and then a quote will come in and you've got to attend to that straightaway. (SBOM3:2Q6)

Table 4.11: Summary of SBOM3's time-management behaviours

| Time-management behaviour type | Key behaviours |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Time assessment</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Worked on a set amount of tasks based on customer requirements - Much of his design work was similar; this, combined with his experience, enabled him to make sound judgements about how long projects would take |
| <i>Planning</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning was not formalised or written down and appeared to be mostly short-term - Priorities quickly changed as deadlines approached - There was not enough time for him to be involved in strategic thinking - Diarising and to-do lists were evident - Prioritising took place around the delivery of particular products with a two-or three-week deadline - Appeared to be organised |
| <i>Monitoring</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The work consisted of a number of smaller deadlines that were monitored carefully - Some frustration evident about time and busyness |
| <i>Executive</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delegation of key roles to other employees - Maintained a close control of all business activity - There were few formal meetings held with staff and his interactions with them were controlled - Most of the work was carried out in the main office of the factory premises, with relatively few interruptions - He engaged in some sales and marketing but not excessively, meaning that he was able to control the work flow that he was personally involved in |

4.4.3 Influences and consequences relating to SBOM3's time-management behaviours

4.4.3.1 Personal influences

SBOM3 described himself in the following terms:

Pleasant, easy to get on with and sometimes a cranky bastard. (SBOM3:2Q7)

His philosophy of life and work centred on his belief in being honest with his customers and employees:

Well, the number one thing is honesty. If you can't be trusted on your word then walk out the door right now and don't come back. That's number one and number two is you've got to communicate with people. (SBOM3:3Q4)

He displayed a strong work ethic:

Working? I don't think I'll stop. I don't think I'll stop working as such. (SBM3:3Q5)

Yeah, you fossilise if you don't work. (SBM3:3Q6)

In terms of his approach to work and an area that affects the time spent on working activities, he described himself as a precisionist and not a perfectionist:

Ah no. No, but I am a precisionist. I'm exact in the details. Because this game requires you to be exact in the details. But I'm not a perfectionist, because that's going to waste your time. That's just a complete waste of energy. (SBOM3:1Q11)

Being precise about what he did at work was his way of ensuring that he met his customers' expectations. This also influenced his workload and the amount of time he was willing to spend on particular activities:

I don't take home work home. As often as not I might take home a bit of reading, but I try and do work at work and leave the home life completely separate. (SBOM3:1Q12)

He was sometimes pressed by customers to deliver products quickly and this sometimes caused stress:

There is a stress factor sometimes. It really depends on the volume of work. It's the volume of work all the time. We get a missed deadline if we've got so much work we just can't do it quick enough. (SBOM3:3Q13)

When he allocated time to projects he cut himself off from other parts of the business operations:

No, because if you try to multitask too much, you get too stressed. You've got to engage fully in the project that's in front of you or else you're not there. (SBOM3:2Q8)

All product manufacturing was undertaken in the workshop, and there was an organised apparatus for this kind of delegated activity:

It really depends. That's the sort of thing that – delivery times and stuff - that's all delegated. I don't know who does that. My people here who I rely on to manage on time. (SBOM3:1Q13)

4.4.3.2 Environmental influences

Throughout the interviews, the strongest environmental influence affecting SBOM3's time and time management was his customers. In the following comment by SBOM3, he acknowledged the influence that customers exerted, and also that he used negotiation as an option to help him better manage his time for delivery. He commented:

They [customers] do drive it to a large extent. But what you do is you've got to boil it down to a point that you can manage.... Can't meet a deadline? You negotiate that. If there are any areas that can't be met because it's the request that you consider to be a little bit onerous, well, then you either decide to spend the extra time yourself – yeah done within the allotted period – or else you negotiate about getting on with the negotiation. So it's just an ongoing thing. (SBOM3:1Q14)

SBOM3's experience in the industry, particularly his understanding of the time it took to complete the designs, which he regularly worked on, influenced him to be "firm" with clients in regard to their expectations:

You're very accommodating, but sometimes you have to be quite firm.... "You've asked me to do this...well, in the time that you've given us we can't achieve that but what we can achieve is this...." But if they stand on you and say this has to be delivered at this time on this day – well then, well, okay, if you want that, then all that we've said about price is out the door, it now comes down to the fact that you want it at this time, you're going to have to pay for it.... Fine with it, and if they say, "No our pockets aren't that deep we'll take a later date." (SBOM3:1Q15)

Increasing the client base was becoming a significant issue for SBOM3, as much of his time was spent applying his technical skills to product design. The impact of this need to focus on particular projects meant that other activities, such as marketing, did not receive as much attention. The pressure from his customers to deliver high-quality machined products was the main pressure to which SBOM3 referred:

The only pressure I can see is that you maintain your standards. That's the pressure that you've got and your standards are whatever are key for your industry or your business. So if you make your standard high-quality, on-time delivery, you've got pressure to meet those and maintain those, so that's where the pressure is. (SBOM3:2Q9)

This pressure caused him to focus much of his time on the delivery of high-quality design and product.

Table 4.12: Summary of the influences on SBOM3's time-management behaviours

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Personal influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong attention to technical detail - Organised from day to day rather than in the long-term - High level of personal involvement in most aspects of the business - Goals were more short-to medium-term rather than long-term - Motivated by customer satisfaction |
| <i>Environmental influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing business - Close relations with customers, some of whom had worked with SBOM3 for years - Structure of the business quite traditional and caused most administrative activity to pass through his hands - Competition was allayed by the boutique nature of the services the business provided |

4.4.3.3 Consequences

SBOM3 was involved in most of the administration of the business, and personally regulated the amount of work that the business generated. This enabled him to manage his time more productively. His high level of involvement with technical design meant that the time he spent on business development was significantly reduced. As a self-described "precisionist" with regard to meeting customer expectations, he was involved in the minutiae of the business, which took him away from big-picture business development.

He was aware of this influence, and thus worked hard to keep a balance between overload and underload. There was some evidence of stress when deadlines were due and he was personally involved in design and tender specifications when there were competing priorities. SBOM3 kept fairly regular hours at work and occasionally took work home. Discretionary time at work was lost in a sea of administration and personal involvement in the prototyping of his designs.

Table 4.13: Summary of the consequences of SBOM3's time-management behaviours

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Consequences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Productivity was based on customer satisfaction - Work-life balance was regulated and SBOM3 kept regular hours - Controlled stress by working set hours and a fixed work regimen - Discretionary time not noticeable, as there was an ongoing and permanent workload that required his attention |
|----------------------------|---|

Table 4.14: Linking ‘Case Study 3’ quotations to 5 emergent themes

| Quotes | Codes | Emerging themes |
|---------|--------------------------|--|
| 3.1:Q1 | Background | <p><u>Examples of the five emerging themes:</u></p> <p>Personal preferences: SBOM3 likes to work alone and consults with his team when he determines they need his advice. In such an instance he acts in a <i>facilitator role</i>. (SBOM3.3Q2). He, like some other SBOMs, is highly concerned with the quality of output and refers to himself as a <i>precisionist</i>. (SBOM3:1Q11)</p> <p>Integrated: SBOM3 integrates his time-management behaviours with his overall management approach. When it came to planning, for instance he comments...<i>Planning for contract work that is in front of me</i>. (SBOM3:1Q6)</p> <p>Informal: SBOM3 has a range of on-going priorities and does not usually use formal planning or scheduling such as to-do lists. He commented: <i>I rarely put them on paper</i> (SBOM3:1Q7).</p> <p>Pragmatic: SBOM3’s experience and ‘get on with it’ nature is how he has always run his business...<i>if I’m successful the order will come straight away, and we’ll get on with it</i>. (SBOM3:1Q6)</p> <p>Flexible: SBOM3 displays some degree of flexibility and is driven by changing customer expectations and deliverables...<i>the important things move up and down the scale</i>. (SBOM3:2Q3)</p> |
| 3.1:Q2 | P (Gs) | |
| 3.1:Q3 | P (Sp) | |
| 3.1:Q4 | TA (Mta) (Mts) | |
| 3.1:Q5 | TA (Mta) P (Sched) | |
| 3.1:Q6 | P (Gs) | |
| 3.1:Q7 | P (Sched) | |
| 3.1:Q8 | E (Del) | |
| 3.1:Q9 | E (Del) | |
| 3.1:Q10 | E (Del) PI (Pers) | |
| 3.1:Q11 | PI (Pers) | |
| 3.1:Q12 | PI (Wpref) Cons (Wlb) | |
| 3.1:Q13 | PI (Wpref) | |
| 3.1:Q14 | EI (Cust) | |
| 3.1:Q15 | EI (Cust) | |
| 3.2:Q1 | P (Sched) | |
| 3.2:Q2 | M (Tec) | |
| 3.2:Q3 | P (Prior) | |
| 3.2:Q4 | P (Prior) (Sched) | |
| 3.2:Q5 | P (Gs) | |
| 3.2:Q6 | E (Pro) | |
| 3.2:Q7 | PI (Pers) | |
| 3.2:Q8 | PI (Poly) | |
| 3.2:Q9 | EI (Cust) PI (Pers) | |
| 3.3:Q1 | E (Del) | |
| 3.3:Q2 | E (Dev) | |
| 3.3:Q3 | E (Pro) | |
| 3.3:Q4 | PI (Pers) | |
| 3.3:Q5 | PI (Ltg) | |

4.5 CASE STUDY 4

SBOM4: OWNER-MANAGER OF A SOFTWARE-DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

4.5.1 Overview

At the time of the interview, SBOM4 was an entrepreneur who had founded his business based on a need he recognised in the marketplace, providing a range of IT solutions such as network support, graphic design and software development for local and overseas firms. At the time of this series of interviews, SBOM4 was working out of the US in an effort to attract interest in a new range of customer relations management systems that his team in Australia were in the process of developing. He was managing from a distance, and had appointed a local operations manager to help ensure that products were developed by the team and delivered on time.

SBOM4 was the youngest of all the managers in this study, and he clearly had a well-considered plan about the short-term future of his business. Though initially quite reluctant to be involved in this research project, he gradually became more interested in the process and the results. He described his work as:

So a big part of what I do is product direction, scheduling, resourcing, organising, marshalling, a bit like a general in a sense. (SBOM4:1Q1)

He worked on the initial setup of projects for a short time and undertook the initial contact and determination of customer requirements directly with the customer, and then handed the work over to his team. He favoured delegation and not getting bogged down in the detail. His job revolved around being in front of customers and ultimately aiming to meet their needs in both the early specification stage and delivery of the product. He had considered his productivity in this process:

So my input's usually very strategic. In fact, I've moved away from being very didactic and specific in the directions that I give because that's kind of a bit of a waste with such a smart team. For me to be supposedly seer and knower of

all and everyone just follows like an automaton, is not a very productive way to be. (SBOM4:1Q2)

All of the interviews with SBOM4 were conducted using Skype, although I did have the opportunity to meet with SBOM4 informally between the second and third interviews. At the time of the interview, he had six full-time people reporting directly to him. He considered time management as a critical part of his business approach and for his future business success.

When asked about his goals for the future, SBOM4 responded:

No, I don't really have a life plan. (SBOM4:1Q3)

SBOM4 was working and living very much in the present and his whole focus was about short-term, rather than long-term achievements. Using Skype did not allow the interviewer to observe his working environment, as at the time of the interview, he was working mainly out of hotels and clients' offices.

4.5.2 SBOM4's time-management behaviours

SBOM4's perception of time management was that, in its more traditional form, it was a luxury reserved for people who worked in controlled environments. His form of time management was "time management on the run", and although he was quite proactive in his approach to networking and developing new business, he worked in an environment characterised by reaction and flexibility:

So, structured time management's a luxury for people who are only dealing with a certain number of concurrent activities at any given moment and they can spend all their time planning and pontificating over everything else. But yeah, basically it's not a luxury I have. (SBOM4:3Q1)

4.5.2.1 Time-assessment behaviours

Time-assessment behaviours appeared to be an important part of SBOM4's style. He made constant remarks about the length of time that activities took. Many of these comments were about the fact that work-related activities actually took too

long and thus there was a level of frustration at that. The unpredictable nature of the tasks meant that he was often dealing with new clients and new software applications, and time assessment was too difficult to determine precisely. Having said this, he still considered the need to assess time for the purpose of using it efficiently. He stated:

I guess it's hard in some aspects because the nature of the tasks is broadly unpredictable. You know, the amount of time that something will take to achieve: while you can sit down and say, "I think I'm going to do it in three hours," or "I think this will take me two hours," the actual achievement of those things is subject to significant environmental forces and just personal. It's a bit like writing a book. (SBOM4:2Q1)

SBOM4 also had a good idea about the time breakup of his working week. Some activities, such as email, used up a considerable amount of his time:

Yeah. So email made up, over the assessed time period, while working at this machine, [of] 64 hours, email occupied 13 and a half of that. (SBOM4:1Q4)

For SBOM4, time-assessment behaviours were important in that he was able to assess the time it took to do certain tasks. Most important for him was to ensure that he maximised the use of his time while exploring new business opportunities. Much of his time-assessment behaviour was based on his awareness of the time it took to complete previous work. He used this knowledge actively to make decisions about future work commitments and deadlines.

4.5.2.2 Planning behaviours

SBOM4's planning behaviours centred around major deadlines and the ongoing and critical need to interact with new clients. The major deadlines were, for the most part, of his own creation. The daily task lists he constructed were designed to ensure that he met those deadlines. Because he was constantly looking for opportunities to expand the business, which was part of his business-development role, he was constantly ready to react to any opportunities that emerged:

So what I basically do is do basic time management around calendars and tasks, and make sure I've got the priorities of what really matters fixed in my mind. And then, as things come in that compete with the planned activities that I know are important, then I'll basically choose to allow them in or not. (SBOM4:3Q2)

During many work days it was necessary for SBOM4 to recalibrate his time usage and reprioritise:

I reprioritise, so if I need to get something in that's more of a timetabled priority, then what I otherwise had down would be allotted down to a later time. (SBOM4:2Q2)

SBOM4 used task lists, which are commonly associated with time management, to help him stay on track and be proactive rather than reactive:

So that aspect of getting things done, where you recognise [that] the switching costs are brutal – and basically you keep yourself in mindsets of either creating lists and then start to think about scheduling and then start to think about doing them, rather than continually just bouncing from one reactive thing to another. (SBOM4:2Q3)

SBOM4 worked out of the United States and his team worked out of an office in Wollongong, NSW, Australia. SBOM4 had to ensure that their combined calendars were synchronised:

...it's a case of, "All right guys, everyone, we all need to put in our calendars what we're going to work on and report on it each day," or something like that, you know what I mean? (SBOM4:3Q3)

In short, SBOM4 displayed planning behaviours that enabled him to function in his apparently quite hectic and chaotic world. Planning was a means of ensuring that he used his time effectively. There was no hint of planning for planning's sake, it was just a necessary part of achieving the goals that he had set for himself.

4.5.2.3 Monitoring behaviour

SBOM4 monitored his use of time regularly, as the environment was subject to rapid change. He reacted to events quickly and repositioned himself:

Yeah, probably twice a day I re-evaluate where I am and what new information has come up that requires things to be moved around. (SBOM4:2Q4)

His ongoing time-usage “self-analysis” enabled him to undertake this reprioritisation:

I generally do a bit of a self-analysis thing on progress and consider the payoff for the many benefits of having done one thing or another and whether or not I’m making good progress or whether it’s a good use of time. (SBOM4:2Q5)

SBOM4 constantly monitored his environment. He was very aware of focusing on activity that produced the most benefit or income. He commented:

I’m more in control because I’m not a slave to a schedule. So control’s really about, well, control, and in that sense I am in control. But there’s probably one day in five across the course of a week where I’m not in control of my time, but that’s because there are other things going on which are pulling me or making me reactive in a way that’s highly frustrating. But generally speaking they’re things that are completely outside of the control of anyone. (SBOM4:2Q6)

What summed up his dilemma with monitoring time, which was also connected to time assessment, was highlighted in the quote below:

So yesterday morning say, Australian time, one of our servers in the office went off line, and that meant that the team didn’t have email and they didn’t have internet access, because it was performing a particular job called a BNS. Now I then got involved and probably spent the next three hours working out how to try and safeguard us from the consequences of that happening on an ongoing basis, so if it went down again what would we do? And so I spent about three hours doing that, which was highly frustrating because there

were other things that I wanted to do with my time yesterday morning but was not able to get onto them. So that's an example of where I'm not in control of my time. (SBOM4:2Q7)

4.5.2.4 Executive behaviour

SBOM4 was far more focused on work than he was in balancing “life activities”. He did not completely cut himself away from his home obligations, but integrated work activities with leisure activities:

So, for example, I've got stuff that I would otherwise, say, do of an evening at the moment. But I've got to make sure I come home and feed the dogs, so that then becomes part of my time-management routine, where I look at what my various activities are and time frames and then work around those. (SBOM4:3Q4)

SBOM4, because of his work style, delegated all of the software development to a team in Australia. He worked with his clients to determine requirements and expectations and relayed that information by email, phone and Skype. They simply worked without him. I had the opportunity to visit his offices in Australia and found that the employees there are in constant contact with SBOM4. At the time, they appeared to be quite “frazzled” about the requirement changes that he was making. This was evident in this comment from SBOM4:

No, I've actively sought to delegate as much as I can. What I need to be conscious of are the relative priorities of things, so sometimes it's really easy to just flick-pass stuff onto other staff when you know they can deal with it, but your preferred priority is to have them absolutely flat out on an actual priority that they're in the middle of solving. And the switching costs and grief associated with flicking it on is almost selfish. (SBOM4:2Q8)

In other instances, it was easier for him to do the work himself rather than to delegate, as he retained much of the essential information in his head. He regarded delegation as something that had consequences, especially in relation to the time it took to receive responses to requests:

Sorry, it's something that I can't delegate without consequences, so I'm doing it myself. And I'm shaking my head going, God, this is taking me forever....
(SBOM4:2Q9)

SBOM4 was constantly readjusting to ensure that progress and productivity were achieved at the right levels. It was not clear how he measured productivity. He stated:

I have good and bad days. Last week was a tough week readjusting to time zones and new working conditions and a new office environment, but yeah, I'm pretty constantly reflecting on productivity and progress. (SBOM4:2Q10)

Table 4.15: Summary of SBOM4's time-management behaviours

| Time-management behaviour type | Key Behaviours |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Time assessment</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time drove every part of his business - Constantly handing work design to his virtual team and expecting quick turnarounds - Experience had enabled him to expect these turnarounds to be completed in realistic time frames |
| <i>Planning</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning was not a single event; it evolved as new opportunities arose - Little formal planning - To-do lists – electronically for scheduling - Organising of team to complete tasks on a daily basis |
| <i>Monitoring</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constant monitoring of time use and a strong sense of the value of the time he was using - Flexible about work hours and was only accountable to himself |
| <i>Executive</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delegation of key technical roles to other employees - His need to constantly respond to changing customer requirements meant that, in many instances, he was unable to improve his time usage - No face to face meetings and communicated with his remote team on an as needed basis - Work-life balance skewed towards work |

4.5.3 Influences and consequences relating to SBOM4's time-management behaviours

4.5.3.1 Personal influences

SBOM4 worked closely with his design team while often being far away from them geographically. While the interviews were taking place, he was developing business in the US. He described himself as an icebreaker:

My job's to kind of be the tip of the icebreaker, so I'm at the front of the icebreaker hitting the ice hard, and that's an important role, And then having a team who understand where we're trying to go and support that vision but are also comfortable with how we then get the fleet through and everything else like that, [and] are able to handle that. (SBOM4:2Q11)

SBOM4's need for independence and a bias for action were a strong part of his character and a factor in his time-management behaviour:

So I've got a very strong natural bias to action. And so that, then, will have an impact on how I, for example, manage my time, I would say – or plan to manage my time. (SBOM4:3Q5)

This response summed up his approach to work, incorporating both his independence and his ability to multitask (polychronicity):

I'm able to do pretty much what I want when I want. So for the last four and a half hours I've sat in the front row of a San Francisco Giants' game and watched them win four-nil in a corporate box and now I've just come back to the office and done some work. But it wasn't a big deal because I was able to sit there and check my email every once in a while [during the game] and not sort of feel like I've taken a day completely out and otherwise ignore[d] people. (SBOM4:2Q12)

He was quite removed from the operational side of the business, and this seemed to suit his nature. He was aware of the importance of maintaining a cash flow, but this did not stop his adventurous spirit from driving his agenda:

I mean, when it comes to raising money and you're doing investment-orientated stuff, "time is money" is very real, so that stuff's important. But yeah, I don't really think about it too much. It's more a need to achieve certain outcomes. So yeah, I guess time is critical, so I sort of take it as an expected or take it as given. (SBOM4:2Q13)

SBOM4 was not only comfortable with delegation, he depended upon it. I was able to observe his work team while he was overseas and they worked industriously while he gave them small bits of information to work on. This often resulted in minor fixes, and sometimes major improvements, to the software that he was marketing in the USA:

It's already becoming like that. A lot of the time I'll sort of say, "Hey, how about we do this?" Or, "Here's the feedback from a customer." And its raw feedback and the team will actually have worked out a solution or have done some prototyping themselves before I've lifted a finger. (SBOM4:1Q5)

Training his staff to be able to understand his requirements had taken a considerable time, and his choice of personnel appeared to have worked out well for him.

During the time of the interviews, SBOM4 had few family commitments while he worked overseas. He commented:

Yeah, I guess there's loved ones and family commitments and other things like that. A lot of the time those things act as anchor points around which other time management activities occur, but that's probably about as real an answer I can give to that kind of question. (SBOM4:3Q6)

He was conscious of the need to maintain some kind of work-life balance, but was able to spend long hours where necessary pursuing customers or writing tenders. SBOM4's time-management behaviours were mainly influenced by his drive to build the business and to develop software that met the changing needs of his customers. His planning and organising were mostly short-term and opportunistic.

4.5.3.2 Environmental influences

SBOM4 set up his business with an office in Australia consisting principally of technical IT designers, and he was thus able to travel and develop business opportunities. One of the technical designers also managed the operational side of the business back in Australia. The business unit appeared to run by itself, fuelled by changing project requirements from SBOM4. Although SBOM4 was the owner-manager of the business, his role was mostly focused on the development of new business, which centred around the development and sales of a particular IT product that needed to be tailored to meet the needs of a wide variety of customers.

The customers, who were contacted by SBOM4 in the first instance, and who were interested in following up with SBOM4, worked at their own schedule and therefore expected SBOM4 to respond immediately to their requests:

I mean, it's just expectations and scheduling, like, you can't predict it so it's kind of hard to manage it sometimes. The unexpected is really the key one. (SBOM4:2Q14)

The environment in which SBOM4 operated was unpredictable and he appeared to find that appealing. Email, in particular, played a significant role in the reactionary way that SBOM 4 managed his time:

It enables you to do more with your time, but you tend to fill it up with more email. But if it was a case of phone calls I'd probably have about 5% of the interactions and conversations that I normally have. (SBOM4:2Q15)

He said that most of the emails were to do with his clients, and the remainder were related to interactions with his team in a percentage of:

Probably 60/40. (SBOM4:2Q16)

Communications technology strongly influenced the nature of his work and the way he went about it. Without email and mobile phones, SBOM4 would not have been able to keep up with client demands.

SBOM4's time-tracking software, due to a conflict from the use of different computers, made it difficult for him to estimate the time that he had spent on certain projects.

So I'm just looking at it here. So, looking at a particular day where I worked for a 10-hour period after turning this software on, because I use another computer a lot which doesn't have this software on it, so this software's only going to recognise probably half of my time at best. (SBOM4:2Q17)

Table 4.16: Summary of the influences on SBOM4's time-management behaviours

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Personal influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entrepreneurial approach to new business opportunities - Strong short-and medium-term goals for generating new business - No longer-term goals - Polychronicity evident in working style |
| <i>Environmental influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business growth - Strong commitment to meeting customer expectations and changing requirements - HR issues associated with his physical distance from his technical and support team - Strong competition in customer relationship management software development |

4.5.3.3 Consequences

The productivity that SBOM demanded from his support team was governed by constantly changing customer requirements that affected both his time management and that of his team:

So they're ones where you think to yourself, "Was this a great use of my time?" And the answer's probably not, because it was low on productivity. But the flip side is it needed to be done. (SBOM4:2Q18)

Although he had started the business, and had originally been engaged in the technical side of software development, his entrepreneurial style had driven him to seek new opportunities and adopt time-management behaviours that aligned to this style.

While he was on the road, SBOM4’s work-life balance skewed heavily towards work. This was also influenced by the time differences between Australia and the United States. He appeared to enjoy his work, which may have contributed to alleviating the stress levels associated with constant travel and living out of a suitcase. He did create discretionary time, for example; he was quite happy to attend a sporting event if it fitted into his schedule.

Table 4.17: Summary of the consequences of SBOM4’s time-management behaviours

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Consequences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constantly monitored personal performance and priorities - Aware of the need to be productive and constantly recalibrating - Appeared to enjoy the lifestyle and did not appear to be stressed - Created time opportunities and spent this time working more closely with his technical support team and developing new opportunities for expanding the business |
|----------------------------|---|

Table 4.18: Linking ‘Case Study 4’ quotations to 5 emergent themes

| Quotes | Codes | Emerging themes |
|---------|----------------------------|--|
| 4.1:Q1 | Background | <p>Examples of the five emerging themes:</p> <p>Personal preferences: SBOM4’s achieved his goals by being strategic approach in his approach to work. He commented: <i>...for me to be the seer...is not a very productive way to be. (SBOM4:1Q2)</i></p> <p>Integrated: Part of SBOM4’s time management routine is to ensure that his home priorities, such as feeding his dogs, fits comfortably into his planning. <i>(SBOM4:3Q4)</i></p> <p>Informal: SBOM4 considered ‘structured time management’ as a luxury that did not fit in with his informal but driven approach to work. <i>(SBOM4:3Q1)</i></p> <p>Pragmatic: SBOM4 shows a pragmatic approach to his priorities and the work he needs to do himself versus the work he delegates. <i>(SBOM4:2Q8)</i></p> <p>Flexible: SBOM4, while acknowledging the need for ‘basic time management’, was flexible in sticking to the to-do list and would change tact when other opportunities or challenges arose that required his immediate attention. <i>(SBOM4:2Q3)(SBOM4:2Q2)</i></p> |
| 4.1:Q2 | P (Sp) | |
| 4.1:Q3 | PI (Lt看) | |
| 4.1:Q4 | TA (Te) | |
| 4.1:Q5 | E (Del) | |
| 4.2:Q1 | TA (Te) (Pvr) | |
| 4.2:Q2 | P (Prior) | |
| 4.2:Q3 | P (Sched) | |
| 4.2:Q4 | M (Da) (Dec) | |
| 4.2:Q5 | M (Dec) | |
| 4.2:Q6 | M (Sched) E (Control) | |
| 4.2:Q7 | M (Sched) E (Control) | |
| 4.2:Q8 | E (Del) | |
| 4.2:Q9 | E (Del) | |
| 4.2:Q10 | Cons (Prod) | |
| 4.2:Q11 | PI (Pers) (Wkpref) | |
| 4.2:Q12 | PI (Pers) | |
| 4.2:Q13 | PI (Lt看) | |
| 4.2:Q14 | EI (Cust) | |
| 4.2:Q15 | E (Tec) | |
| 4.2:Q16 | EI (Cust) | |
| 4.2:Q17 | EI (Tec) | |
| 4.2:Q18 | Cons (Prod) | |
| 4.3:Q1 | E (Pro) | |
| 4.3:Q2 | P (Org) (Sched) (Prior) | |
| 4.3:Q3 | P (Sched) (Prior) | |
| 4.3:Q4 | Cons (Wlb) | |
| 4.3:Q5 | PI (Pers) | |
| 4.3:Q6 | Cons (Wlb) | |

4.6 CASE STUDY 5

SBOM5: OWNER-MANAGER OF AN INFORMATION-TECHNOLOGY CONSULTING-COMPANY

4.6.1 Overview

At the time of the interview, SBOM5 was the owner-manager of a consulting business and he worked from home. He worked with, and coordinated, work for 10 to 15 consultants on a regular basis and had formal subcontracting relationships with them. This meant that each of the consultants operated relatively independently much of the time. None of the consultants was totally dependent upon SBOM5 for work. This had implications for his ability to influence them to undertake the consulting work that he generated:

...for example, I do not have authority to make any of the consultants take on a specific assignment because, as associates, they can choose them.
(SBOM5:1Q1)

SBOM5 worked from home by choice. His time management was interwoven into a lifestyle that revolved around his severely physically disabled son who, wheelchair-bound, required around-the-clock attention. While much of this attention was provided by external carers, SBOM5 took on quite a bit of this responsibility himself. He identified himself as the prime carer, and the support carers, whom he employed, were directly responsible to him. His son took absolute priority over every work activity in which he was involved. Having said that, many of the work patterns of SBOM5 were predictable, and therefore SBOM5 could work somewhat uninterrupted at regular intervals. The time-management interviews were conducted at his home, where he primarily works. He described his motive for working in this way:

I went into private consultancy business as a lifestyle issue, so depending on the home situation it can vary greatly. (SBOM5:1Q2)

When it came to pressure, the care needed for his son was intense, and this appeared to be a much greater pressure than his work. He stated:

Personally my biggest time pressure comes from the family side rather than from the work side. (SBOM5:1Q3)

SBOM5 remained very interested in his work both from a technical perspective and as a means of achieving his goals. He divided his time between marketing the business and administration. He took quite a hands-off role in the business: he knew enough about the technical aspects to be able to credibly speak with customers, this, then, enabled him to delegate a great deal of this activity to his band of consultants. SBOM5 still remained responsible for the final product, which he delivered to the customer. He also dealt with the technical part of the business and:

Because that's the part I enjoy the most. (SBOM5:1Q4)

Another factor in balancing his time was that many of his US-based clients worked in opposite time zones to his own: while they were working, he was asleep. Therefore, he had changed some of his working hours to suit this situation.

4.6.2 SBOM5's time-management behaviours

4.6.2.1 Time-assessment behaviours

SBOM5's time-assessment behaviours were difficult to separate from his other time-management behaviours. Because work often took a back seat to his family priorities, he was not inclined to accept work that he could not complete on time. His judgement about completion was based mainly on past experience. He considered himself to be good at determining the time that his involvement in work actually took:

Yes. I generally have a pretty good sense of how long things will take, what I can plan for a certain time or what I should not be attempting in a certain time window. So from a point of view of task and time perception, yes, I'm

very good at it. From a point of view of planning my use of time in the medium to long term, it's almost non-existent. (SBOM5:3Q1)

This acute awareness of how long it took to complete work tasks influenced the decisions he made about accepting projects and making commitments to clients.

4.6.2.2 Planning behaviours

SBOM5's planning was governed considerably by his other priorities. He did use planning tools such as to-do lists, but these were mainly used as reminders. He explained:

Occasionally, yes, I will make a to-do list, type of planning, just to remind myself of some details. But in terms of other planning typically not. (SBOM5:2Q1)

His greatest challenge was not to find work and not to overcommit himself. This was where his planning behaviours merged with his time-assessment behaviours. He explained:

I avoid overcommitting myself. I had in the last few months – I actually had a very nice and attractive contract pretty much on the table, at which point I had to decline it because the other project which we were doing, which all three of us took fairly heavy personal hits, in other words off the tracks. So I didn't really have the choice of taking on another project and ending up with two projects off the tracks. I'm not taking another commitment and trying to restore the original one to some level of performance, and that's what I had to do. (SBOM5:2Q2)

SBOM5 considered himself to be well organised. I had the opportunity to visit his office. It was very neatly laid out and I noticed a to-do list that was partially completed. On organisation, he said:

I'm probably pretty well organised in terms of what I need to do. Yeah, I think generally people find that, yes, I'm organised, when left to my own devices I'm

always on time but I'm not very often left to my own devices, things go astray. But generally, yeah, I would be pretty well organised. (SBOM5:3Q2)

Much of SBOM5's planning time involved delegating to the other consultants with whom he worked. This meant that his planning largely consisted of a combination of personal planning and handing out tasks to consultants.

4.6.2.3 Monitoring behaviours

Time monitoring, like the other two elements of time-management behaviour, was also blended into his whole approach to work. Interruptions constantly affected his ability to effectively take action to ensure work was completed on time. He said:

That's one of my constant bugbears, is that the constant interruptions are totally contrary to my mental makeup. (SBOM5:3Q3)

The interruptions meant that any project that could have taken another person an hour may, for him, have continued over eight or more hours. He was strongly aware of this "stretched-out-time" work pattern, and he monitored his own progress regularly.

4.6.2.4 Executive behaviours

In terms of executive behaviours, making any changes to his environment or the way he conducted his work was tempered by the fact that these actions would have a considerable effect on his family:

The reason my response is a gut feel of bordering on futile is that I realise that if I try to change certain behaviours, that I'm going to – the impact of me changing my behaviour is very likely going to require change of behaviour of others within the family, not within the business but within the family. Because my disruption of any planning doesn't come from the business, it comes primarily from within the family. But it still warrants thinking about. (SBOM5:2Q3)

SBOM5 was careful about the kinds of work he involved himself with, as he knew there was a range of jobs that would not fit into his chosen lifestyle:

I do not commit myself to activities which require a significant presence at particular times and very intense commitments, as they are just too high-risk for me to deliver. (SBOM5:1Q5)

SBOM5 regarded time management as more of an “instinctive pattern”. He described time management as something that, in his experience with work, used to be a separate formal activity. Now time management had become instinctive and integrated into every decision he made throughout the day. He had trained himself to constantly manage and monitor time rather than put time aside to formally plan or schedule. He also mentioned that formalising time management, and making too much of a deal of it, contributed to unnecessary stress.

Table 4.19: Summary of SBOM5's time-management behaviours

| Time-management behaviour type | Key behaviours |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Time assessment</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience gave him a good grasp of the real time it took to complete work related jobs given his work-life situation - His ability to assess time accurately caused him to carefully choose projects and reject projects that would be too demanding |
| <i>Planning</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning was ongoing and focused on a few clients - Planning was iterative and flexible - Little use of to-do lists or scheduling - Priorities were outside of work - Planning was seriously compromised by constant interruptions |
| <i>Monitoring</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constant monitoring to satisfy client needs - He fitted work in where and when he could and the monitoring was more around his home life situation which significantly affected his ability to spend time on project work |
| <i>Executive</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Had structured the whole business to work in with his work-life model – consultants worked relatively independently of him and his family commitments could be met while working from home - Purposely did not seek work that involved travel as this would potentially take up too much of his time |

4.6.3 Influences and consequences relating to SBOM5's time-management behaviours

4.6.3.1 Personal influences

SBOM5 described himself as introverted:

*Okay, generally more introverted, don't relate to people very well.
(SBOM5:3Q4)*

He also acknowledged that he did not make strong personal connections with clients:

The simple fact [is] that I do not really establish that much of a connection with a person, okay. (SBOM5:3Q5)

His arrangements with his consultants were such that they were encouraged to work independently of him. His experience and his need to balance his work and home life meant that he did not overcommit himself.

All of these personal influences enabled him to carefully manage his time to balance his work commitments with his life commitments. He acknowledged that stress could affect his work and, from experience, stress was related to productivity:

...but I've consciously stopped beating myself about the times when I'm not productive. (SBOM5:3Q6)

He also noted that, in terms of planning, the disruption caused by his life situation was so regular that he had decided not to let such disruptions affect him too much.

4.6.3.2 Environmental influences

Much of the work that SBOM5 undertook was with clients in the US, so he managed his time around client requests by email.

If I leave [it until] 9 o'clock then I typically miss those people and it becomes delayed by a day, so it basically improves your response by doing it earlier. (SBOM5:2Q4)

SBOM5 experienced a constant demand for his products and services from his clients, but he constantly regulated the amount of work he would take on.

Another internal environmental influence that improved SBOM's time-management behaviours was the criteria by which he employed consultants. SBOM5 only employed consultants to work with him who had considerable experience:

The prerequisite for anybody coming on board is that they know what they don't know. (SBOM5:1Q6)

This had a direct influence on his ability to manage his time and was considered an executive behaviour in the broader sense. This relationship was explained:

They are able to bring in their own work. So if somebody wants them to take on an assignment, then [they] take on that assignment. (SBOM5:1Q7)

Technology enabled SBOM5 to work from home. He produced software solutions that could be sent to the client electronically and required no physical design or development on his part. In relation to this, he commented:

These days the technology has actually enabled me to continue working. If it wasn't for the technology, the ease with which we can exchange documents, the ease with which we can have teleconference, video conference even, look at the same document right around the world, if required, those things are absolutely essential. (SBOM5:3Q7)

He also used Skype to communicate with overseas clients and his associate consultants:

We're actually quite conscious about keeping the costs down, so we're teleconferencing, we use that at the drop of a hat. I spend a lot more on communications than I spend on petrol. (SBOM5:2Q5)

Table 4.20: Summary of the influences on SBOM5's time-management behaviours

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Personal influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly technical skill base - Personally very organised - Focused more on the pressing needs that his home life demanded than his personal needs - Personal goals were mainly around staying healthy enough to continue his work-life balance |
| <i>Environmental influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintained a customer base despite having to occasionally reduce work or refuse work from some customers - Maintained professional yet distant relationships with associate consultants |

4.6.3.3 Consequences

SBOM5 created an environment that enabled him to manage his time in a way that accommodated competing demands. His life was much more skewed towards home than it was towards work; however, work was very important to him, from both a financial perspective and a genuine desire to be involved in designing and developing solutions for customers. He had learnt to live with stress, which appeared to give way to fatigue. He had little discretionary time, as such, and any time savings he made in regard to work were immediately taken up by his care commitments to his profoundly disabled son.

Table 4.21: Summary of the consequences of SBOM5's time-management behaviours

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| <i>Consequences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some of his life challenges affected every part of his work and planning - Productivity changed each day but he did believe that his life circumstances prevented him from being as productive as he would have liked - Appeared to manage stress by having an ability to regulate work load but had little discretionary time |
|---------------------|--|

Table 4.22: Linking ‘Case Study 5’ quotations to 5 emergent themes

| Quotes | Codes | Emerging themes |
|--------|---------------------------|---|
| 5.1:Q1 | Background | <p>Examples of the five emerging themes:</p> <p>Personal preferences: SBOM5’s preference was to work on the technical side of the business. In his words: <i>Because that’s the part I enjoy the most. (SBOM5:1Q4)</i></p> <p>Integrated: The line between SBOM5’s work and life is significantly blurred. His commitment to his family, due to his son’s chronic disability, means that work time is whenever he is not acting in his caring capacity.</p> <p>Informal: SBOM5 arranges his own time table and shows few of the formalities of other small businesses. The informality may be attributed to the difficulties he has experienced with formal planning.</p> <p>Pragmatic: SBOM5 does not commit to activities in which he cannot deliver: <i>...they are just too high-risk for me. (SBOM5:1Q5)</i></p> <p>Flexible: SBOM5 found it difficult to be flexible in dealing with disruption. He considered this <i>...contrary to my mental makeup. (SBOM5:3Q3)</i></p> |
| 5.1:Q2 | Cons (Wlb) PI (Wkpref) | |
| 5.1:Q3 | Cons (Stress) | |
| 5.1:Q4 | PI (Pers) | |
| 5.1:Q5 | E (Pro) Cons (Wlb) | |
| 5.1:Q6 | EI (Team) | |
| 5.1:Q7 | EI (Str) | |
| 5.2:Q1 | P (Sched) | |
| 5.2:Q2 | P (Pp) | |
| 5.2:Q3 | E (Pro) | |
| 5.2:Q4 | EI (Cust) | |
| 5.2:Q5 | EI (Size) | |
| 5.3:Q1 | TA (Te) (Mta) | |
| 5.3:Q2 | P (Org) | |
| 5.3:Q3 | EI (Inter) | |
| 5.3:Q4 | PI (Pers) | |
| 5.3:Q5 | PI (Pers) | |
| 5.3:Q6 | Cons (Prod) | |
| 5.3:Q7 | EI (Tec) | |
| | | |

4.7 CASE STUDY 6

SBOM6: OWNER-MANAGER OF A BICYCLE-RETAIL OUTLET

4.7.1 Overview

At the time of this interview, SBOM6 was the owner-manager of a bicycle retail outlet and had owned the business for over 20 years having acquired the business from its founder. He had been taught both the trade of the business and the mechanical skills required at a bike shop by the previous owner. Like several of the interview participants, he had never worked in any other industry. SBOM6 was in his late 50s at the time of the interview, and regularly talked about his future within or outside the business as he moved towards retirement age.

Three interviews were held with SBOM6 over a nine-week period. The first interview took place at SBOM6's house. The second interview took place at the bicycle shop that he owned and managed. The third interview took place at the researcher's house as a matter of convenience for both parties.

SBOM6 took on work during the day that he described as "fill-in work". He also spent time on work that interested him. In terms of time management, his approach was extremely flexible:

I talk to a lot of customers. (SBOM6:1Q1)

My role is a roving role I suppose. (SBOM6:2Q1)

But it's a day of interruptions a lot of the time. And it's very hard to define – or I mean, yes, if you wanted I could quantify specific hours, but... today's going to vary because I'm going to get interrupted, can you do this, have you done anything about that? (SBOM6:1Q2)

SBOM6 did not have a formal job description and appeared to prefer it that way. He commented:

If there's a problem then that's my role, it just gets flick-passed, so there you go, solve this. (SBOM6:1Q3)

Doing what needs to be done is what I want to do. (SBOM6:1Q4)

SBOM6's long-term goal was to sell the business and retire. He was conscious of his need to delegate more of his tasks to the senior employees. His short-term goal was to improve the processes and systems of the business as well as to focus on improving customer satisfaction and employees' performance.

4.7.2 SBOM6's time-management behaviours

4.7.2.1 Time-assessment behaviours

SBOM6 estimated that he spent 50% of his time with customers, 20% in the workshop and 30% on what he described as "other." By his own admission, he found these categories confusing, as there were cases of people who used up his time who were neither customers nor his own staff. He defined a customer as one who actually purchased something. He also suggested that he was rarely overwhelmed by work and that he was usually able to control how much work he actually did:

You can get overwhelmed but usually just handle it. You can still see the finish of it. "All right, if we've got this much to do, well I won't be going home at 6.00, this isn't going to finish til 8.30", or something. But being overwhelmed by it, no, that's rare that we get overwhelmed. We handle most situations, I suppose. (SBOM6:1Q5)

SBOM6's personal time-assessment behaviour was based on years of experience. He had a strong sense of how long work-related activities should take, yet he appeared to take little notice of this. He appeared to be committed to completing work to suit customers' time frames despite the fact that these jobs took up a considerable amount of his time, including his home time.

4.7.2.2 Planning behaviours

SBOM6 reported that he did not really engage in planning behaviour for the running of the business. Rather, he suggested that he kept his plans in his head:

*But I'm having trouble sitting down and formulating that sort of thing.
(SBOM6:3Q1)*

Some planning took place in regard to the long-term arrangements for the leasing of the work premises, but this was also not formalised. Most of the planning and scheduling took place automatically and was generated by customer demand. The cycle for reordering and restocking bicycle models begins in August each year when the new models come out. Much of the planning that SBOM6 was involved in revolved around choosing which models his shop would stock. Bicycle parts and accessories were reordered on a continual basis. Much of this activity was delegated to his store manager.

The time log showed that SBOM6 spent most of his time on jobs with short time frames. He would continuously move from sales to workshop maintenance and then to customer service.

4.7.2.3 Monitoring behaviours

SBOM6 was aware of his time usage and he mostly monitored it retrospectively. The second time I met with SBOM6, I observed that he was working at 6.30 pm after everyone else had gone home. He was working on a bike for a customer who required it the next day. He was aware of the time, and the fact that he should have gone home by this stage, but his commitment to customer satisfaction and getting the job done was his foremost priority.

4.7.2.4 Executive behaviours

SBOM6 displayed few executive behaviours. He understood the need to change environmental situations to enable him to spend his time differently but he showed that he became quite consumed with the moment. He explained:

Most of the time I am just bouncing off a problem somebody throws at me and then reacting to it. (SBOM6:1Q6)

SBOM6 mainly delegated workshop activities. The bicycle workshop ran quite independently of him most of the time, and his growing confidence in his staff enabled him to attend to other activities:

Yeah, I suppose I do delegate more nowadays because I've got more confidence in the staff and there's just a lot more to be done. (SBOM6:1Q7)

In response to a question about delegating even more, his response was:

No, I don't really want to. (SBOM6:1Q8)

Executive behaviours were also a way of helping SBOM6 deal with interruptions. In many references during the interviews, interruptions governed much of SBOM6's work and consequently his time usage. This enabled him to be, as he described, "a rover".

Table 4.23: Summary of SBOM6's time-management behaviours

| Time-management behaviour type | Key behaviours |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Time assessment</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - His experience enabled him to accurately forecast the time duration of work-related activity - This was reinforced by his having clear time expectations of his staff in the workshop in relation to standard repair and maintenance jobs |
| <i>Planning</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An ongoing goal to improve his work-life balance - No formalised planning – “on the run” planning with staff in terms of product requirements - Involved in all elements of the business from sales to administration and human resource management - Very flexible and reactive instead of prioritising and scheduling |
| <i>Monitoring</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spent time on the priorities that occurred as the day unfolded rather than allocating specific times to projects and keeping to those times - Integrated time management into his every day work |
| <i>Executive</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delegation of key roles to other employees but was still involved to some extent in the execution of their work - Meetings occasionally - The desire to “rove” and react meant that there was little desire to change the environment |

4.7.3 Influences and consequences relating to SBOM6's time-management behaviours

4.7.3.1 Personal influences

The most prominent personal characteristic evident in the interviews was his very strong work ethic. This was evident with respect to both the long hours he spent in the business most days of the week, and his willingness to fill in when staff were absent or allocated to other duties. Although he managed up to 15 people, his role as a manager varied from hands-on repairs to sales and administration. His knowledge of the business was extensive and a factor in his time-management behaviour, as was his willingness to be involved in every part of the business when it suited him. His own description of himself was "laissez-faire", which he defined as being "easy-going" or "laid back."

4.7.3.2 Environmental influences

The trust that SBOM6 had built up, along with the close relationships he had formed, strongly influenced his time-management behaviour. Because people trusted him, and he provided a high level of professional service to them, he felt a sense of responsibility to meet customers' needs directly. Any plans or schedules he might have had were postponed when customers requested his personal help:

Yeah, trust is, you said it before but I suppose trust, you want people to trust you. (SBOM6:3Q2)

Some of the personal influences and environmental influences are difficult to differentiate; for example, his relationships with customers. According to SBOM6, customers wanted to deal with him directly and not deal with other staff. This may have applied in regard to purchasing advice or technical specifications. He commented:

...when a customer comes into the shop I think it's really important that they see the boss there, here, contributing, doing stuff, functioning within the business and – yeah. (SBOM6:2Q2)

Dealing with customers and treating them as important individuals used a lot of his time. He was happy to provide this service, and said:

I give them probably more time than I should. But then they love – well, I perceive that they think they're special because they've got my time. That's just part of a selling technique more than anything. Yeah, and my belief that they like seeing and talking to the boss. (SBOM6:2Q3)

Allowing himself to be interrupted suggested that he preferred to have a very loose time-management approach to work in such a way that he did not have to stick to a schedule and could react to customer inquiries:

I allow too much time and I allow myself to be interrupted. So instead of having specific times, as I said earlier, so you've got nine hours where the doors are open and people interrupt you for those nine hours. And having these times aside to do jobs that you need to do, it's getting a balance between those interruptions and having to actually achieve tasks. (SBOM6:3Q3)

One of the issues that emerged for SBOM6 that affected his priorities to some extent was the personal physical issues associated with working with his hands:

...from a physical point of view in that my hands are now starting to get really pained and they make noises and those sorts of things and they hurt a lot. (SBOM6:1Q9)

These physical challenges affected what he was capable of doing and forced him to reprioritise his activities to less onerous tasks. Also, technology enabled him to follow the progress of the business, in terms of sales and profit, electronically. This allowed him to spend more time at home without feeling the compulsion of having to go into the shop. About his computer system, he commented:

Our computer system now allows me to be sitting at home and watching how many dollars [go] through the till and who does what. Now, the camera system doesn't actually work but that that's something that we will bring in soon too. (SBOM6:3Q4)

Table 4.24: Summary of the influences on SBOM6's time-management behaviours

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Personal influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A jack of all trades - Needed to be personally involved with customers who required his help - Was the first to arrive and the last to leave on many days |
| <i>Environmental influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many customers wanted to deal with him directly and he both encouraged this and was motivated by satisfying their needs - The business was structured to enable him to adopt a "roving" role and to focus on any work that he thought was a priority at the time - Technology helped him in his quest for a work-life balance |

4.7.3.3 Consequences

The hands-on and personable style that SBOM6 had adopted over the years meant that he had created a need for his personal involvement with a wide range of customers. His performance and productivity are difficult to ascertain, as he multitasked throughout the day, putting his efforts into where he saw a problem. He engaged in few of the traditional and more mechanical time-management activities and allowed himself to be involved in a range of issues throughout each day in a number of different discipline areas. He expressed some concern about the lack of focus about his own work, but had set up a business with processes and systems that enabled him to act in this "roving" role. On a number of occasions, he came into work on his days off to fill a staffing gap or to deal with a client who wanted to talk with him directly instead of with any of the other staff.

Table 4.25: Summary of the consequences of SBOM6's time-management behaviours

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| <i>Consequences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SBOM6 was drawn to the detail and interest that his work provided - His performance was difficult to ascertain due to the many different activities in which he was involved every day - Constantly busy rather than stressed - In recent years, he had taken steps to improve his work-life balance and to delegate more tasks and responsibilities to existing staff - While at work his discretionary time followed his interests |
|----------------------------|--|

Table 4.26: Linking 'Case Study 6' quotations to 5 emergent themes

| Quotes | Codes | Emerging themes |
|--------|--------------------------------|---|
| 6.1:Q1 | Background EI (Cust) | <p>Examples of the five emerging themes:</p> <p>Personal preferences: SBOM6's personal preference was to be a 'hands on' manager who filled in the gaps in respect to work.</p> <p>Integrated: SBOM6 main role was a problem solver, which he encouraged, and this meant that his time management was 'on the run' and was difficult to distinguish from his other management activities.</p> <p>Informal: SBOM6's definition of his own role as a 'roving role' indicates his preference for informality. (SBOM6Z:2Q1)</p> <p>Pragmatic: SBOM6 is pragmatic: <i>Doing things that need to be done is what I want to do. (SBOM6:1Q4)</i> He was also aware of the importance of filling in gaps related to work task rather than having to employ too many staff.</p> <p>Flexible: SBOM6's flexibility is born out in his comment about being perceived by customers as ...<i>contributing, doing stuff, functioning within the business. (SBOM6:2Q2)</i></p> |
| 6.1:Q2 | EI (Inter) | |
| 6.1:Q3 | PI (Wkpref) E (Del) (Multi) | |
| 6.1:Q4 | PI (Wkpref) | |
| 6.1:Q5 | TA (Pvr) PI (Wkpref) | |
| 6.1:Q6 | E (Pro) | |
| 6.1:Q7 | E (Del) | |
| 6.1:Q8 | E (Del) | |
| 6.1:Q9 | EI (Pers) | |
| 6.2:Q1 | PI (Wkpref) | |
| 6.2:Q2 | E (Cust) | |
| 6.2:Q3 | E (Cust) | |
| 6.2:Q9 | EI (Uncoded) | |
| 6.3:Q1 | P (Gs) (Sched) | |
| 6.3:Q2 | E (Team) | |
| 6.3:Q3 | E (Ints) | |
| 6.3:Q4 | EI (Tec) | |
| | | |

4.8 CASE STUDY 7

SBOM7: PARTNER OF AN OUTDOOR-ADVENTURE TRAINING-COMPANY

4.8.1 Overview

At the time of the interview SBOM7 was a partner in a small outdoor training company, specialising in team challenges. The company employed a small group of full-time employees and a range of consultants who regularly provided business services to the organisation and to their clients. Three interviews were held in the offices of SBOM7 over a six-week period. SBOM7 had only recently taken up this role, and many of the comments are related to his previous work as an SBOM. He satisfied the requirements for this research because he had been an SBOM for over 10 years at different stages in his career

SBOM7's company was a small business, and therefore his work was multi-tiered:

The major areas that I focus on are sales and marketing – so, managing client enquiries, progressing them through the sales process hopefully to eventually a conversion process. I also look after our marketing activities as well in terms of our company web site, putting together corporate newsletters, things like that. (SBOM7:1Q1)

SBOM7 described a range of activities in which he was involved and he commented:

So I can do anything from doing sales in one day to running an event that night and be in a kitchen cleaning up dishes. (SBOM7:1Q2)

When discussing what he prefers to do, SBOM7 indicated that because his personality was somewhat extroverted, he had a tendency to want to work on those activities that interested him more, but that he had to stay mindful of the need to keep new work coming through the pipeline. The cycle of the year also played an important role in his work, as the workload became quiet in August/September and then ramped up again towards the end of the year.

4.8.2 SBOM7's time-management behaviours

4.8.2.1 Time-assessment behaviours

Experience played an important part of SBOM7's ability to estimate the time it took him to complete tasks. SBOM7 suggested that the work he usually undertook was not uniform, and therefore:

Because not everything we do is of a uniform size or it's not standardised to any extent, I'll generally look ahead to see what's required and have an idea in my mind as to how long that will take. (SBOM7:1Q3)

He appeared to be quite indifferent about the value of time assessment:

I suppose that's the general breakup of my time and I certainly don't get into the habit of – I know what I need to do and approximately how long that will take and then I'll prioritise what I need to do during the course of the rest of the day. (SBOM7:2Q1)

4.8.2.2 Planning behaviours

SBOM7's planning was often driven by deadlines in the form of requests from clients to provide quotes:

Quite often we're given deadlines or timelines that a client will need information or a quote by and if you don't meet that particular deadline you're not in the consideration set, so to speak. So it is very important for us, and also because we're delivering an event on a particular day. (SBOM7:2Q2)

SBOM7 indicated that he was not prepared to spend a lot of time scheduling, as the time it took was often wasted time:

So if you're spending an hour of the day going over your calendar and juggling things because of time blowouts, you know, is that reducing your efficiency in time management? (SBOM7:1Q4)

Priorities were constantly being reset:

It's one of those things where you're continually reassessing priorities as to when things need to be done. So we need the flexibility, we also need to be fluid, but we also then need to work with suppliers and things like that and adhere to deadlines and things like that as well. So I suppose in essence it's a real juggling act. (SBOM7:1Q5)

SBOM7 did not think highly of diarising:

I suppose, and you asked me about the time-management sheet, I've never actually been one who's been in the habit of diarising the things that I've done during the day, so it's a difficult thing for me to stop and review, "Oh yeah, I've done this and this in the last half an hour and I've still got, and I'll be doing this in the rest of the day." (SBOM7:2Q3)

4.8.2.3 Monitoring behaviours

SBOM7's analogy of a "juggler juggling balls" in reference to monitoring time referred to difficulty that interruptions caused when he tried to keep a schedule:

Yeah, it's quite easy when you've got one or two balls. But then suddenly from nowhere – and somewhere that you can't see – someone's thrown another ball into the mix. And then someone will throw another ball, and then someone will throw another ball. (SBOM7:3Q1)

He mentioned earlier that he was not really driven by a need to keep a formal schedule; and this meant that his monitoring did not take place at the time of work-related activities, but rather after the event:

For example, we had one yesterday where we ran about 30 minutes over time and not realising the venue we were using there was someone bumping in after we'd finished at the venue. (SBOM7:2Q4)

He went on to say that he was not aware how long the event had been taking until a problem arose with the venue:

We weren't aware of that at the time and certainly in hindsight if we were aware of that at the time there are steps that we could have taken during the course of the afternoon to ensure that would [not] have occurred. (SBOM7:2Q5)

Monitoring and reflection also caused SBOM7 to learn from the experience, and this may have had time implications for his future planning:

...and I suppose that's an additional learning that we'll take into account now when we're dealing with venues: that even though they might not have told us that there's someone using the establishment after we're finished, next time that'll be a question that we'll ask them beforehand. (SBOM7:2Q6)

4.8.2.4 Executive behaviours

SBOM7's executive behaviours were an extended form of planning, prioritising and scheduling other people's activities so that they were able to support him when needed. SBOM7's executive behaviours appeared to be ad hoc:

I suppose one of the main things that I do is trying to organise other people so that my own schedule or my own priorities are managed as well, so that if I require somebody to-do something on a particular day I will just mention it in passing a couple of days beforehand, you know, "Don't forget about this, this needs to be done on this date, we need to organise this by then." (SBOM7:3Q2)

Although, he said:

I'll delegate that to either the administration manager or Mick, the event manager and I'll generally try to focus more on the sales and overall management of the business, evaluating where we are and then projecting that forward as to, "Well this is a likely forecast for this year." (SBOM7:3Q3)

The size of his business meant that much of the work became his responsibility, as there was no one to whom to delegate.

Table 4.27: Summary of SBOM7's time-management behaviours

| Time-management behaviour type | Key behaviours |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Time assessment</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time-usage awareness - Time assessment after events – more emphasis on getting the job done - Difficult environment to work out how long particular activities would take as they were often markedly different in client expectations |
| <i>Planning</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning appeared to be reactive but comprehensive once an opportunity arose - Organising and scheduling largely carried out based on opportunities that arose; there was a definite reluctance to formalise scheduling in the form of diarising or list-making |
| <i>Monitoring</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring appeared to be done after the events captured in the interviews - Monitoring was affected by the lack of formal planning and was replaced by “bulges” of work before major deadlines that were not monitored in terms of time usage and productivity |
| <i>Executive</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certain processes were being constantly reviewed to increase productivity, and there was a sense of learning from the experience - A certain amount of delegation was evident though there were few staff in the actual office to whom to delegate. |

4.8.3 Influences and consequences relating to SBOM7's time-management behaviours

4.8.3.1 Personal influences

SBOM7 described himself as “somewhat extroverted”, as mentioned in Section 4.8.1.1. His in-depth responses to the interview questions were full of detail and examples. For example, his response to a question about the influence of customers was 702 words long. He described himself as a “direct communicator” who was interested in “creating a relationship with potential clients” (SBOM7:1Q6).

He tended to be monochronic in his approach to everyday work. He was not interested in, and he appeared to be dismissive of, the relevance and value of the more mechanical elements of time management such as planning and scheduling, and let his customers determine his priorities. He worked quite independently of the other staff in his office and employed contractors to carry out specific skill-based activities for clients.

4.8.3.2 Environmental influences

Like many of the other SBOMs interviewed, SBOM7 was strongly driven by customer service in his time-management behaviours.

Our highest priority within our own organisation, being in a very competitive market space and being a small to medium-size enterprise, we're very much focused on customer service, so if a customer is on the phone nine times out of 10 or 95 times out of 100 I'll take the customer's phone call, I'll get something done urgently. (SBOM7:3Q4)

Responding to customers, especially the opportunity to work with new customers, created a sense of urgency. Again, this affected time-management schedules and priorities by causing SBOM7 to drop everything else and attend to the needs of a customer. The events company that he was part of was driven by the events themselves, which created major deadlines. There was certainly a deadline rush when it came to ensuring that all parties were satisfied:

If an event's supposed to start 1 o'clock and it starts at five past 1.00 it doesn't reflect well on you, and it can also throw out other planning further down. (SBOM7:3Q5)

He made use of shared calendars for events that were also shared with clients. He also used Dropbox, a cloud file-sharing and saving software program:

...it's helped us not only from a time-management perspective, it's helped us from a cost perspective. (SBOM7:3Q6)

Dealing with clients on a national basis meant that, there was a dependency on communications technologies.

So we have a software system which manages all that customer information and also manages our sales and marketing activities. That assists me, but when I'm managing that process I always have one eye on the KPIs and how they're tracking (a) on a year-to-date basis; (b) on a year-to-year comparison and; (c) what the future trend of those will be as well. (SBOM7:3Q7)

Table 4.28: Summary of the influences on SBOM7's time-management behaviours

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Personal influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extroverted in nature - Polychronic time usage - Detail-minded - Interested in maintaining work-life balance |
| <i>Environmental influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to keep business afloat was a constant issue - A range of tasks associated in delivering quality to clients - Planning was project-specific and interrupted by clients when their priorities or requirements changed - Use of electronic diary to prioritise and schedule |

4.8.3.3 Consequences

SBOM7's work, as mentioned in Section 4.8.1, was customer driven as were his time-management behaviours. The consequence of this was that he measured his personal performance by his success in meeting customers' expectations. His productivity was left to his own devices as long as his customers were satisfied. SBOM7's work-life balance was affected by both seasonal factors such as the time of year and personal factors such as his ability to leave work when he finished the job rather than to stay at work to meet someone else's expectations. Stress varied throughout the year according to the amount of work that was required by customers. In peak times, during the year, competing deadlines caused him to 'rush'. He did not appear to follow many formal time-management techniques and this allowed him to be quite flexible with his time.

Table 4.29: Summary of the consequences of SBOM7's time-management behaviours

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Consequences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Performance was measured against customer expectations- Work-life balance changed during different demand periods of the year- Stress accompanied the deadline rushes that occurred when an event was due to take place |
|----------------------------|---|

Table 4.30: Linking ‘Case Study 7’ quotations to 5 emergent themes

| Quotes | Codes | Emerging themes |
|--------|-------------------------|--|
| 7.1:Q1 | Background | <p>Examples of the five emerging themes:</p> <p>Personal preferences: SBOM7, though part of a team, worked quite independently and had little time for formal time-management planning.</p> <p>Integrated: Not using formal scheduling or organising, much of his planning was done based on impending major events. He appeared to have an intuitive ability to prioritise work priorities.</p> <p>Informal: There were only a few staff in the office and informal discussions about up and coming events were the order of the day. He commented: <i>...so that if I require somebody to-do something on a particular day I will just mention it in passing... (SBOM7:3Q3)</i></p> <p>Pragmatic: When SBOM7 uses software to help him track business activities, he also keeps ‘one eye on the KPIs and how they are tracking’. This is a practical and realistic way of maintaining control. <i>(SBOM7:3Q7)</i></p> <p>Flexible: SBOM7’s need to rapidly respond to changing customer requirements used the word ‘fluid’ to describe the kind of flexibility that was required. <i>(SBOM7:1Q5)</i></p> |
| 7.1:Q2 | E (Multi) | |
| 7.1:Q3 | TA (Te) (Mta) | |
| 7.1:Q4 | P (Prior) (Org) (Sched) | |
| 7.1:Q5 | P (Prior) | |
| 7.1:Q6 | PI (Pers) (Wkpref) | |
| 7.2:Q1 | TA (Pvr) | |
| 7.2:Q2 | P (Prior) EI (Cust) | |
| 7.2:Q3 | P (Sched) M (Pa) | |
| 7.2:Q4 | E (Pro) | |
| 7.2:Q5 | M (Pa) | |
| 7.2:Q6 | M (Pa) | |
| 7.3:Q1 | P (Sched) M (Proj) | |
| 7.3:Q2 | E (Del) P (Prior) | |
| 7.3:Q3 | E (Del) | |
| 7.3:Q4 | EI (Comp) (Cust) | |
| 7.3:Q5 | EI (Cust) | |
| 7.3:Q6 | EI (Tec) | |
| 7.3:Q7 | EI (Tec) | |
| | | |

4.9 CASE STUDY 8

SBOM8: OWNER-MANGER OF AN INFORMATION-TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS-SUPPORT COMPANY

4.9.1 Overview

At the time of the interview, SBOM8 was the owner-manager of an information-technology company that provided a range of commercial and support services to local and interstate clients. The business primarily provided what SBOM8 refers to as 'IT solutions', such as networking, computer support and systems building. Three interviews were held with SBOM8 over a six-week period. All of the meetings took place in the board room of his offices. SBOM8 had started the company 12 years earlier and had gradually built the business up from a single-person operation to a larger small business employing 12 full-time employees and two part-time employees.

SBOM8's role had changed continually in the business from a hands-on role, where he provided services directly to customers, to a hands-off role, where the general management function was now a delegated role. He had recently appointed one of his senior staff to the position of general manager, and this action had a significant impact on how he spent his time. His role moved from an operational position to a more strategic role in the business, where he became more focused on major client issues and business development. He described his current role as:

Market definition and exploration, and product definition and development.
(SBOM8:1Q1)

SBOM8 appeared to have a high level of time-management awareness:

Absolutely, absolutely. And a lot of that's come from the way in which we develop and build our services. We don't work on a time and materials basis, and I know that probably sounds counterintuitive when you're talking about good time-management practices. (SBOM8:1Q2)

SBOM8 had developed a strongly time-conscious culture in his company with a focus on meeting deadlines and ensuring customer satisfaction. In terms of the breakup of his work, activities such as product development and marketing, in his estimation:

...takes up 25% of my time. Project management 40% and some financial and some day-to-day reactive stuff. (SBOM8:1Q3)

He also made a comment which, from a time-management perspective, was relevant but difficult to objectively quantify:

The amount of mental time that I would actually spend on idea development and things like that would probably be another 10 to 12 hours a week. (SBOM8:1Q4)

SBOM8 mentioned that five or six years ago he would work up to 70 hours per week, and admitted that he had a habit of wanting to fix everything himself, but that, through experience, he had been able to spend much less time at work. He offered a definition of time management:

Well, to me, time management is making the most efficient and effective use out of each period of time that you're given. (SBOM8:1Q5)

He still managed to become involved in technical issues when his employees asked him to, but preferred to act in more of an advisory capacity. SBOM8 constantly repositioned himself in the business to ensure that he used his time efficiently.

4.9.2 SBOM8's time-management behaviours

4.9.2.1 Time-assessment behaviours

In his assessment of his own time usage, SBOM8's work was 80% proactive and 20% reactive. The time log that he completed verified that this was an accurate approximation of his working week, where much of the work was planned. As his role had changed over the years, he believed that his time was much better used now:

And from my personal perspective I believe my value of the business is far more now than what it was when I was working 80 hours a week, even though the actual activities that I churn out are probably less measurable, but distinctly of higher value. (SBOM8:2Q1)

Another part of time assessment that was evident, was SBOM8's reflections on his largely younger employees, who, in his view, did not have a realistic understanding of the time required for specific tasks:

Yeah, that's a 10-minute job provided there's no phone calls, there's no incoming emails, there's nobody asking you, so realistically what's a 10-minute job in actual time required is probably a two-to three-hour elapsed-time job, right, and that differential between actual time and elapsed time is one of the hardest concepts to grasp in any project-management environment. (SBOM8:2Q2)

4.9.2.2 Planning behaviours

As the owner-manager of the business, SBOM8 conducted a regular Monday-morning meeting at 11.00 am to review the performance of the previous week and ensure that relevant staff clearly understood the tasks for the new week. The staff then broke up into divisional meetings to sort out targets for the coming week. It was effectively a time-management meeting for the whole staff. This regular planning exercise was part of the time-management culture of SBOM8's business, and enabled him to pursue his other strategic interests.

On a daily basis, SBOM8 committed to a range of more 'traditional' time-management operational activities such as sitting down at the beginning of the month and looking at the targets that needed to be achieved, and then putting hours against those targets. He added:

Then within those weeks I'll try and break down almost a work breakdown structure in a week and then plan it into my diary. (SBOM8:1Q6)

He also sat down with his external advisors on a quarterly basis and looked at financial performance and business development. Planning was a key part of the culture in this business, and it went hand in hand with the measurements put in place to ensure that the planning would lead to efficient outcomes:

So that means that you need to plan around how you can fit certain things in. And to me, if people say, "I can't do that," that means it's a priority issue, it's not that they can't do it, it's that they don't want to do it. And it literally just comes down to having an understanding of what priorities you should be putting on various activities. (SBOM8:1Q7)

SBOM8's planning behaviours were much more strategic than tactical or operational. While he was aware of the need for more precise planning behaviours for his staff, he was also aware of his need to focus on bigger-picture issues. His planning behaviours were therefore quite spontaneous or reactive, and they often focused on a combination of his particular technical interests and on higher-level client interaction.

4.9.2.3 Monitoring behaviours

A review of the time log that SBOM8 completed indicated a very strong commitment to both planning and monitoring of time use. SBOM8 and his staff used a project-management approach to the allocation of time whereby daily events were recorded under a range of codes that translated into project activities. There was a strong awareness of the need to effectively use time to achieve work outcomes:

The time management and the reason we actually keep timesheets is more statistical analysis of our performance against those benchmarks that we've defined, and then looking at how we're tracking against those benchmarks and then looking for any trends that we can then go and address and find out whether it's a systemic failure or whether it's a technology failure, whether it's a training issue, whether it's a client issue, et cetera, et cetera. (SBOM8:1Q8)

The work environment was suited to this kind of approach, as the majority of employees spent most of their time in the workplace, which enabled time-management monitoring to take place. He explained:

I have to still think about that and think about the activities that I'm doing at any point in time and going, "Hang on a minute, am I the best person to be doing this?" (SBOM8:2Q3)

And further on:

So [you ask yourself] do you find that you are constantly adjusting week to week, day to day, just to make sure that balance is in swing? (SBOM8:2Q4)

This constant adjusting had become an accepted part of SBOM8's approach to time management. SBOM8 acted as an enabler who allowed others to deal with the detail; he had to adjust to the inevitable consequences of giving employees freedom of choice with regard to their project-related activities.

4.9.2.4 Executive behaviours

SBOM8 divided his time amongst family, work and the community, and continually monitored, controlled and adjusted the time spent on each. He had consciously set his business up to run without the necessity of his being there all the time. He mentioned in the interviews that he sometimes spent as little as one day a week in the office. This enabled him to take a more strategic and less operational role.

Yeah, look, I'd have to say on the overall scale of things, yes, I do feel like I'm in control of my time. (SBOM8:1Q9)

Part of the process of ensuring that his time was well used, he created a few process steps between himself and the client:

It's taken a bit of retraining of clients, especially some of our longer-term clients that were used to dealing with me on a day-to-day basis, to actually build trust in the rest of the team. (SBOM8:2Q5)

SBOM8 appeared to be a master of delegation, and he proactively created opportunities to delegate to his workforce. This acted as a development tool for his employees while freeing him to pursue the activities that, he perceived, brought the most value to the business. He commented:

Probably the biggest thing I've got to learn is trusting other people to control various aspects of the business, particularly in the sales and business-development area. (SBOM8:2Q6)

His approach to delegation is summed up in his philosophy of focusing on the outcome rather than the process:

Now, as far as I'm concerned, if he's achieving the outcomes I really don't care what the process is.... (SBOM8:2Q7)

Table 4.31: Summary of SBOM8's time-management behaviours

| Time-management behaviour type | Key behaviours |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Time assessment</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conscious of time usage and particularly that of other employees - Strong awareness of the need for personal time management - Experience had given him a good grasp of the real time it takes to complete jobs |
| <i>Planning</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning was formalised and undertaken regularly using an established project-management approach - Use of to-do lists a regular part of daily planning |
| <i>Monitoring</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constantly monitoring priorities around work, family and community - Monitoring the work of other employees caused him to delegate key responsibilities to general manager |
| <i>Executive</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delegation was a strong part of SBOM8's approach to time management - Work-life balance was an absolute priority - In meetings, he took an advisory, rather than a dominant, role |

4.9.3 Influences and consequences relating to SBOM8's time-management behaviours

4.9.3.1 *Personal influences*

SBOM8 had a strong sense of purpose, and appeared to be particularly well organised with his time usage. He was very willing to delegate tasks that he could otherwise do himself. He also displayed characteristics of an entrepreneur, such as his willingness to let go of authority and responsibility to focus on the bigger picture and more-strategic issues relating to the business. He had moved away from work that involved his technical expertise to focus on management and leadership. He did not appear to be a procrastinator and was much more inclined to deal with pressing matters on the spot.

SBOM8 was also quite involved in the community and took on a number of community leadership roles as the third major facet of his time usage. Having the priorities of family, work and community meant that he had to regularly organise and reshuffle his priorities to meet these competing demands.

4.9.3.2 *Environmental influences*

The personal relationships that SBOM8 had developed with key customers were the most obvious external environmental influence that affected his time-management behaviours. From the time logs, it was clear that he spent much of his time dealing directly with customers either in meetings or visiting their premises. He also depended on his general manager to assist him with the organisation of such interactions as well as involving the general manager in the implementation of the decisions from those meetings.

Internally, SBOM8 constantly monitored and checked the productivity of his staff and made adjustments to ensure that they were spending their time efficiently and effectively. His interest in developing people not only freed up his time, but also enabled him to concentrate on bigger-picture strategic issues.

Table 4.32: Summary of influences on SBOM8's time-management behaviours

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Personal influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly motivated to expand the business - Well-organised and time-conscious - Strong sense of purpose and where he wanted the business to be - Personal commitment to community involvement |
| <i>Environmental influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set up the structure of the business to operate without his input on every decision - Continued to develop people within the business to be able to make decisions without his input |

4.9.3.3 Consequences

The balance between SBOM8's work, community and home life was critical to the way he operated the business.

I make decisions on when I need to be in the office, when I don't need to be in the office and either one to a greater or lesser extent, although if you ask my wife she'd probably tells you that she runs my life. (SBOM8:2Q8)

Once he committed a pro-rata spread of time to each of these areas, he was strongly influenced to make decisions about his level of involvement in his activities at work.

Table 4.33: Summary of the consequences of SBOM8's time-management behaviours

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Consequences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A very strong commitment to work-life balance that he worked constantly to sustain - Constant monitoring of performance and productivity - His weekly calendars were full of blank spaces, which were blocks of his discretionary time. |
|----------------------------|---|

Table 4.34: Linking ‘Case Study 8’ quotations to 5 emergent themes

| Quotes | Codes | Emerging themes |
|--------|-----------------------------|---|
| 8.1:Q1 | Background | <p>Examples of the five emerging themes:</p> <p>Personal preferences: SBOM8 positioned himself away from technical and detailed operational work and took a more strategic role. He is also challenged by: <i>...trusting other people to control various aspects of the business... (SBOM8:2Q6)</i></p> <p>Integrated: SBOM8 particularly favours strategic and project planning. When he delegates the tasks, he also delegates the responsibilities for time management. SBOM8’s time management is integrated in such a way that it appears to be subconscious. He acknowledges that: <i>...the actual activities that I churn out are probably less measureable. (SBOM8:2Q1)</i></p> <p>Informal: SBOM8 set a number of processes in motion in order to take an informal role in the organisation.</p> <p>Pragmatic: SBOM8’s time is broken into family, work and the community. He made pragmatic decisions about his time in order to satisfy his desire to be involved in all three domains.</p> <p>Flexible: SBOM8 designs his whole week in order to be flexible to deal with customers and to take a consultative/technical role in the business. He notes that he is: <i>...constantly adjusting week to week, day to day, just to make sure the balance is in swing. (SBOM8:2Q4)</i></p> |
| 8.1:Q2 | P (Prior) | |
| 8.1:Q3 | TA (Pvr) | |
| 8.1:Q4 | TA (Mta) | |
| 8.1:Q5 | EI (Pers) | |
| 8.1:Q6 | P (Prior) (Sched) | |
| 8.1:Q7 | P (Prior) | |
| 8.1:Q8 | M (Da) (Pa) | |
| 8.1:Q9 | E (Cont) | |
| 8.2:Q1 | P (Gs) (Prior) (Str) | |
| 8.2:Q2 | TA (Te) (Mts) | |
| 8.2:Q3 | M (Dec) E (Del) | |
| 8.2:Q4 | M (Da) (Dec) | |
| 8.2:Q5 | E (Pro) (Dev) Con (Prod) | |
| 8.2:Q6 | E (Del) | |
| 8.2:Q7 | E (Del) | |
| 8.2:Q8 | C (Wlb) (Disc) | |
| | | |

4.10 CASE STUDY 9

SBOM9: PARTNER OF A LEADERSHIP CONSULTING-FIRM

4.10.1 Overview

At the time of this interview, SBOM9 was the partner and director of a leadership-consulting firm that aimed to help organisations grow and develop through better leadership. SBOM9's principal work involved overseeing the capability of the business as well as administration of its intellectual property. The company employed 15 full-time staff in Australia and had a handful of other people working globally.

...but I'm responsible for selling about 20% of our revenue, and I'm responsible for the overall delivery of capability, which represents about 60% of our revenue. (SBOM9:1Q1)

Three interviews were carried out with SBOM9 by Skype while he was in his office in Sydney, Australia. Although his fellow employees did not report to SBOM9 directly, they worked together closely and depended on SBOM9 for his particular specialist skills. In his own words:

...it's less about personality and more just about experience and knowledge, you know; we've kind of learnt how to do it along the way. (SBOM9:1Q2)

The capability part of the business, which largely concerned sales, and took up 75% of SBOM9's time. Fifteen percent of his time was taken up with intellectual property, and the rest was taken up with governance as part of his responsibility as a director. He did not consider this to be an ideal breakdown at the time. He would have liked to see more time spent on intellectual property than on capability. He suggested that 60-65% of his time was proactive and the rest reactive, and he described his work as "chaotic and rushed". SBOM9 also noted that times were tough at the time of the interview and it was much more difficult to attract sales than it had been in the past. During the discussions it was evident that SBOM9 worked long hours and travelled regularly around Australia to meet the

ongoing demands of his business. He depended a great deal on the support of his colleagues to be able to perform his work effectively.

As with many small businesses, the customer drove the business's activity:

We're a customer facing-business and so our customer is king, as ever, And so we get things done and we get things for customers, and sometimes we work all night to get things done and we drop things. (SBOM9:1Q3)

4.10.2 SBOM9's time-management behaviours

4.10.2.1 Time-assessment behaviours

SBOM9 reflected that he had difficulty in quantifying how long work-related activities took, which meant that his time-assessment behaviours were constantly being challenged:

...and sometimes I personally am ambitious about how much time those things take. So sometimes I don't quite get them to the standard I would really like, because I haven't allowed myself quite enough time to do them or I haven't started them early enough. (SBOM9:1Q4)

SBOM9's day characteristically was dominated by his involvement in several large projects that were interspersed with client meetings. He often became immersed in certain projects that he had calculated would take a certain amount of time, but found that he had severely underestimated:

I'm an eternal optimistic about how little time things will take and how many things I can squeeze into my day. (SBOM9:1Q5)

He, like many of the other SBOMs interviewed in this study, reacted to this by spending long hours after work to complete projects.

4.10.2.2 Planning behaviours

With regard to the more mechanical aspects of time management, SBOM9 spent some time planning:

...there's a lot of planning that goes in our world. (SBOM9:1Q6)

And, in regard to his own planning:

I usually try and plan, use a diary to plan a day so we can, say, if I'm going to be essentially doing a meeting, I try and have all my meetings in the city so I'm not moving around between meetings, or have it in a chunk at least, rather than spend time going to and fro by meeting. (SBOM9:2Q1)

As to using more-traditional ways of planning, SBOM9 commented:

...it's become abundantly clear as I[ve] worked this thing [that] I need to have a different kind of setup, you know, have a list that's actually written down and prioritised. (SBOM9:2Q2)

I'm articulate, I'm smart, I read a lot, I know what I'm talking about, I'm good on my feet and I'm far better as someone who is reacting to a circumstance than I am planning for something.... (SBOM9:3Q1)

4.10.2.3 Monitoring behaviours

It was in the monitoring of his own use of time that SBOM9 clearly struggled. Although found it difficult to keep a closer track on how he spent his time, he was also aware that some projects must be completed despite any planning. He commented:

I try to keep track of what those things are and try to keep track of when I should be at certain places, so things like Outlook [are] quite useful for me, the task list on Outlook, to remind me that there are clients I haven't called. (SBOM9:1Q7)

And I once did a little exercise where I looked at how to try to sort of track how much time I lost from just chopping and changing in and out of emails over the space of a couple of hours, and really it was nearly 40 minutes, and it felt like only just, you know, I'll just answer that email. And it was probably close to 40 minutes of time. (SBOM9:2Q3)

SBOM9 was also aware of his own personality traits that influenced him towards certain time-management behaviours. His preoccupation with certain project related activities meant that time became less significant issue than the completion of the project.

I have the kind of personality where working on one or two things in more depth and more detail suits me better and so this working on lots of things at a reasonable level of detail doesn't really suit me that well, it's just the nature of our beast now.(SBOM9:1Q8)

4.10.2.4 Executive behaviours

In regards to making good use of his time, there was considerable evidence to suggest that SBOM9 carefully planned work-related activities to maximise his use of time. He described a recent interstate trip to a capital city where he planned 10 meetings in line with another job he was doing at the time.

SBOM9's time log consisted of large blocks of time allocated to tenders or meetings with clients. Some of these time periods, including travel were between three and five hours. He also included some looming deadlines in his time log which were related to the blocks of time described above. The time log also revealed that he worked longer hours on one of the days to ensure that a deadline was met. Deadlines were a significant driver in SBOM9's time-management approach.

SBOM9 used his travelling time to do as much work as possible. He travelled for about an hour to work each day by car and spent much of that time on the phone to clients. He planned this activity, and ensured that he had the necessary information with him both to respond to clients' needs and to make full use of time spent travelling. He said:

I have about an hour's commute each way so I use that time for phone calls quite often. I'll, like, most of us probably do an hour or so, maybe a little bit longer, of work at home. (SBOM9:2Q4)

Similarly, he worked on the way to client meetings:

Yeah. So I tend to make a lot of calls in the car. All my taxi travel, probably, maybe not so much here, so I spend a lot of 15 minutes in cabs between meetings. I would have typically been on the phone in the cab to somebody or doing email. So I try to use my phone in a way that makes it efficient. (SBOM9:3Q2)

And while at home he still spent time on work-related projects:

But to be honest, you know, although it's work-related, I'll sit with my feet up in front of the tellie with my iPad and do email, but I'm kind of doing both, but I'm still working. (SBOM9:3Q3)

SBOM admitted that many of the meetings he attended were not efficient; and this was a time-management behaviour that he was aware of but did not actively know how to control. The antithesis of “executive behaviours” is getting distracted, and his comments on this were an attempt to justify this distraction:

I've got a very general idea of what I've got to try and get done for the day, but if I've got half of that done in the space of a day in the midst of these other kind of reactive things that I'm talking to you about, and just getting distracted, that would probably be a pretty average day. (SBOM9:2Q5)

There was little evidence to suggest that SBOM9 engaged in activity that helped him to regulate and control his work. He primarily worked on major projects, which were centred on proposals to major clients for new business; these consumed most of his time. He worked rigorously until the projects were completed.

Table 4.35: Summary of SBOM9's time-management behaviours

| Time-management behaviour types | Key behaviours |
|--|--|
| <i>Time assessment</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aware of time usage - Aware of the time it took to complete workshop tasks - Experience gave him a good grasp of the real time it took to complete jobs |
| <i>Planning</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning was not formalised or written down - Little evidence of scheduling - Prioritising took place day to day and hour to hour - On-the-spot organising of staff |
| <i>Monitoring</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deadline-driven and tended to monitor time as deadlines approached |
| <i>Executive</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Used travel time to work and home to contact clients and work associates - Involved in meetings only when he had useful input - Tended to let events unfold rather than control them |

4.10.3 Influences and consequences relating to SBOM9's time-management behaviours

4.10.3.1 Personal influences

The strongest influence on SBOM9's time-management behaviour was the phenomenon described as 'deadline rush' (König & Kleinmann, 2005). By the nature of his work, he singlehandedly created the deadlines by agreeing to write a proposal for work that his company desired to win. He then became subject to the pressures that the deadlines imposed, which usually took the form of writing a proposal to the best standard possible in the available time that was left. He also acknowledged that this was a recurring behaviour that he was aware of but that he had not, as yet, worked out a strategy for dealing with it. He explained:

Better with deadlines and pressure, I sort of get my flywheel spinning, and then I can actually churn through work. (SBOM9:2Q6)

One of the causal influences of SBOM9's deadline rush was his need to be challenged and stimulated by his work. This had influenced his time-management behaviours considerably, and may account for his being distracted:

I like to have enough stuff done that I can actually work, and then I like to get into the fray and just sort of take it as it comes. And so from that perspective I'm much better at responding to things rather than planning. (SBOM9:2Q7)

SBOM9, like the other SBOM participants in this study, had his own approach to managing time. While he understood the importance of time management and was keen to undertake this research to find out more about his own time-management behaviours, he was also very aware of his limitations. He noted his own propensity to get side-tracked and to be reactive to other business issues that naturally emerged in his busy work environment. He also was aware of the impact that this had on the achievement of more urgent goals.

He was strongly aware of his own shortcomings in regard to being disciplined in time management, but this was justified by getting through a great deal of work:

I could be more disciplined, but I'm still getting through a hell of a lot of stuff, and I had to put a number of things on hold to be properly prepared for this thing. (SBOM9:3Q4)

SBOM9 still remained optimistic about the importance of time management and the need to continue improving:

Still learning time-management skills: I am, and need to get significantly more disciplined about blocking out my time and say, "I'm going to sit there and I'm going to write this thing." (SBOM9:3Q5)

Overall, SBOM9 appeared to be content with the achievement of the work goals that he set himself. His "higgledy-piggledy" (in his words) approach to achieving these goals was well suited to a personality that thrived on new challenges and opportunities:

So I'm driven by that sort of desire: not only to do great work for my clients in order to help the world be a better place, but you know, I kind of want to do intellectually challenging, cool kind[s] of stuff and be at the top end of my game. (SBOM9:3Q6)

4.10.3.2 Environmental influences

The sometimes frantic nature of the environment within which SBOM9 operated caused an "all hands on deck" mentality whereby the driver of all behaviour was the winning of contracts. He described his work environment:

So we're running like mad bastards to – you know, scrambling to exploit new opportunities and find new ways of doing things and get things into the market. (SBOM9:3Q7)

Customers proved to be a constant influential driver of behaviour:

We are dictated to by client need sometimes; and not just by client need but also by the needs of other people in the business as they meet their client needs. (SBOM9:3Q8)

People in the business also made 'legitimate' claims on his time:

Yeah, so I think the question, was do they make claims on my time and the answer is yes, lots of people in the business do. And because the biggest chunk of our business is this capability in our program- development stuff, I've probably got a large number of people making claims for various entirely legitimate reasons. (SBOM9:3Q9)

Table 4.36: Summary of the influences on SBOM9's time-management behaviours

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Personal influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Procrastinator- Multitasker- Prone to deadline rush- Got bored and distracted easily |
| <i>Environmental influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Maintaining and growing the business in a very competitive marketplace was a source of constant concern- Close personal relationships with key customers |

4.10.3.3 Consequences

Constantly generating new business opportunities had meant that SBOM9 regularly spent home time doing or thinking about work-related activity:

And it's just having an impact on how we run the business. It's having an impact at home. It's an impact on – you're tired, all those kinds of things, so we are being forced to do that. (SBOM9:3Q10)

He was aware of the impact of trying to meet a range of client expectations, and used time management at work to minimise the amount of work he took home.

Table 4.37: Summary of the consequences of SBOM9's time-management behaviours

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Consequences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Productivity was a constant challenge often due to his being distracted easily - Challenged by blocking out time to achieve work goals - He reflected that his stress levels had lowered over the years with experience - Work-life balance was more in control than it had been in the not too distant past |
|----------------------------|---|

Table 4.38: Linking ‘Case Study 9’ quotations to 5 emergent themes

| Quotes | Codes | Emerging themes |
|---------|---|--|
| 9.1:Q1 | Background | <p>Examples of the five emerging themes:</p> <p>Personal preferences: SBOM9 works at his own pace focusing on critical meetings and key events during each day. He mentioned that he needed to incorporate more time management into his regimen. He said that he should use: ... <i>a list that’s actually written down and prioritised.</i> (SBOM9:2Q2)</p> <p>Integrated: Following from the comments on personal preferences, his priorities and goals are integrated into all of his work activities. It is difficult to separate planning from on-going work activities.</p> <p>Informal: SBOM9 gives the impression of informality yet has a clear knowledge of his goals and priorities. He goes about them in such a way that is reflective of his easy going personality.</p> <p>Pragmatic: Part of his pragmatic approach is in his use of travel time, which happens regularly, to make phone calls to clients. (SBOM9:2Q4)</p> <p>Flexible: SBOM9 worked well in a flexible environment where time management was used particularly in relation to deadlines brought about by client demands. He stated: ...<i>and sometimes we work all night to get things done and we drop things.</i> (SBOM9:1Q3)</p> |
| 9.1:Q2 | P (Pers) | |
| 9.1:Q3 | EI (Cust) | |
| 9.1:Q4 | TA (Pvr) | |
| 9.1:Q5 | TA (Te) | |
| 9.1:Q6 | P (Pp) (Gs) | |
| 9.1:Q7 | M (Tec) (Proj) (Da) | |
| 9.1:Q8 | E (Multi) | |
| 9.2:Q1 | P (Org) (Sched) Cons (Prod) E (Pro) | |
| 9.2:Q2 | P (Prior) (Org) (Sched) | |
| 9.2:Q3 | M (Tec) (Pa) | |
| 9.2:Q4 | E (Multi) | |
| 9.2:Q5 | E (Multi) Cons (Disc) PI (Poly) | |
| 9.2:Q6 | EI (Cust) | |
| 9.2:Q7 | EI (Team) | |
| 9.3:Q1 | E (Pro) | |
| 9.3:Q2 | E (Multi) (Pro) | |
| 9.3:Q3 | Cons (Wlb) | |
| 9.3:Q4 | P (Pers) (Procras) | |
| 9.3:Q5 | P (Org) (Sched) | |
| 9.3:Q6 | PI (Ltg) | |
| 9.3:Q7 | EI (Cust) | |
| 9.3:Q8 | EI (Cust) | |
| 9.3:Q9 | EI (Team) | |
| 9.3:Q10 | Cons (Wlb) | |
| | | |

4.11 CASE STUDY 10

SBOM10: OWNER-MANAGER OF AN INFORMATION-TECHNOLOGY COMPANY

4.11.1 Overview

At the time of this interview, SBOM10 was the founder and owner of an information-technology business that she had managed and operated for the past 14 years. The company's work included online marketing, e-commerce websites, internet marketing and recently some government contract work in e-commerce training. Like many of the other SBOMs, SBOM10 had gradually expanded the business from a one-person operation to a business employing five full-time staff and a resource base of up to 10 casual and contracting staff who were required for different projects.

Three interviews were held with SBOM10 over a four-month period. Due to work commitments, SBOM10 had to postpone both the second and third meetings. The first interview took place at SBOM10's office. The second interview took place at a café near SBOM10's office. The third interview took place at SBOM10's office.

SBOM10 saw her principal role as setting the vision of the company:

As the business owner my job is to set the vision for the company, to recruit the team and also to motivate them. Also to identify roles for people and the services we provide to clients. (SBOM10:1Q1)

The breakdown of work that SBOM10 undertook consisted of 50% technical work and 50% client liaison and business development. SBOM10 noted that having children had changed her priorities, and she now did less technical work, although it still seemed to be an important part of her workload. SBOM10 worked between 50 and 80 hours per week depending on deadlines. She started work after dropping her children off to school. She left work early most days and then came back to work in the later afternoon to finish off outstanding work. Time was also taken up by online work and phone calls to overseas contacts. She commented:

The remaining 50%, lots of that will be in marketing, management, networking, you know, you name it, and it could be financial as well. (SBOM10:1Q2)

SBOM10 described her work as 'busy yet manageable', and described the priorities that were important to her:

Busy but manageable. Running a business you need to learn how to manage your stress. Time for dinner with friends and family. I like to be busy. Not complaining. Busy but happy. Family is close and the work is very flexible. I want to have a happy family and nothing can interfere with that. (SBOM10:1Q3)

SBOM10 regarded time management as a way of ensuring that her priorities were addressed in a disciplined way:

The discipline is important. The whole thing will fall apart if you don't know your priorities. (SBOM10:1Q4)

SBOM10's business mainly carried out project work for clients and the project-management model was influential in the way she viewed time management:

Detailed project plan, then I can free myself up. (SBOM10:1Q5)

SBOM10 used the services of an advisory board to guide her and help her make important business decisions. They acted as a sounding board and provided a range of recommendations and support services to her business.

So I tend to propose to them the tasks that I'm about to do or the challenges I have or the successes that I have. So I do share that. (SBOM10:1Q6)

4.11.2 SBOM10's time-management behaviours

SBOM10 was very conscious about all aspects of time management. She frequently displayed a range of time-management behaviours and was particularly aware of the need to make work time matter, in terms of achieving goals and meeting

targets. Of all of the research participants, she adopted the “mechanics of time management” most fully, and rigorously monitored how her time was spent.

4.11.2.1 Time-assessment behaviours

SBOM10 was particularly aware about how long activities took. She constantly talked about the time that was allocated to particular activities and her need to be flexible:

...the earliest I come in is 10 past 9.00 or 9 o'clock, and then three days a week at lunchtime I need to care for my second son, so at lunchtime I normally look after him and then come back at about 1.30 or 2.00. And then 3 o'clock I go again and then I would cook my dinner, take my little boy home, cook my dinner, come back here at about 4 o'clock or 4.15 and then I work, and... probably maybe my prime hour is now; my first son's at home, I can focus on my work, and I probably maybe go home at about 6.30. So I would have about approximately two hours uninterrupted and knowing everything's done for the day. (SBOM10:1Q7)

It was important for SBOM10 to know what she could achieve in the times that were available to her.

4.11.2.2 Planning behaviours

SBOM10 engaged in a range of planning behaviours, and referred to her own approach as “I remember things in my way, I do them my way” and “you plan everything in a project sheet”. She used a project-management style of planning whereby tasks were allocated to specific people and milestones and deadlines were included:

So I tend to work – for every project I have a very detailed project plan and I know that if I spend time doing that project plan, that I can free myself up later on. When I'm not around, people know what to do. (SBOM10:1Q8)

SBOM10 also mentioned that while ‘to-do lists work’, she used a system of not-to-do lists to ensure she was on track. About that, she said:

What I also tend to implement through my work is not-to-do lists as well – ‘this is what I shouldn’t be doing’- so I note down that if it comes, this, don’t do it, if it’s not in my to-do list. So I quickly recognise I shouldn’t be doing this, so it often helps to guide you to make that decision quickly rather than thinking about it. I’m not sitting in the thinking zone for too long. And that’s how I think that I achieve a lot of things that I achieve. (SBOM10:2Q1)

The action lists worked with the larger project-management lists and were cross-referenced to ensure that both the strategic and the tactical activities were completed:

We’ve got an action-plan list. We also have a project list and we also have to-do lists, so there’s a few lists that we tend to compare, so we have the organisation action list and then each individual, they have their own list. We’ve also got a staff meeting every week. (SBOM10:2Q2)

The end result was more important than the time that it took, according to SBOM10:

I’m happy with the extra hours that go in there as long as the end result is good. (SBOM10:2Q3)

4.11.2.3 Monitoring behaviours

The project-planning approach that SBOM10 had adopted included built-in monitoring mechanisms. It was not necessary to separate this planning approach from monitoring behaviours. She quite rigidly adhered to the milestones, deadlines and deliverables that her project-management system prescribed.

4.11.2.4 Executive behaviours

SBOM10 undertook a number of regular executive behaviours that ensured that she made the best use of her time. One particular activity that helped SBOM10 realign her priorities was to take time off once each month on a set day to enable her to work ‘on the business...not in the business’ (SBOM10:3Q1).

SBOM10 was aware of the necessity to ensure that the employees' work was aligned to the goals of the organisation. This also promoted a time-management culture in the business:

...we recognised that [tomorrow] we need to do something for next year. So my operation manager and I will be working in this room reviewing all the roles for everybody and identify[ing] the gaps, so tomorrow will be fully that task. (SBOM10:3Q2)

SBOM10 regarded the interview process that for this study as an opportunity to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of her own time-management behaviours.

Table 4.39: Summary of SBOM10's time-management behaviours

| Time-management behaviour types | Key behaviours |
|--|---|
| <i>Time assessment</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High level of awareness of time usage and the need to link time usage with productivity - The project-management approach helped ensure that time planning and time actuals were lined up |
| <i>Planning</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both strategic and tactical planning were given a high priority - Prioritisation and scheduling were a regular part of SBOM10's work regimen - Staff were encouraged to-do the same |
| <i>Monitoring</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constant monitoring of time usage through the project-management system - Constant monitoring of others' time usage - Aware of the need to be involved in other non-work related activities meant that her time usage was under constant surveillance |
| <i>Executive</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delegating of key roles to other employees though reluctant to let go of work that involved key customers - Meetings were well planned and action plans were monitored |

4.11.3 Influences and consequences relating to SBOM10's time-management behaviours

4.11.3.1 Personal influences

Throughout the interviews, SBOM10 appeared to be extroverted and highly organised. She was actively involved in all parts of the business and in technical work. SBOM10 described herself as:

Open, fun, trustworthy, "can-do," a calculated risk taker. (SBOM10:2Q4)

She was also aware how her time management affected the business and was constantly readjusting priorities and schedules to ensure that customers' needs were met:

...I think that my personality [helps to] shape the culture of my company, at the same time as deciding or impacting on my time management. (SBOM10:2Q5)

SBOM10 was involved in multiple tasks simultaneously and delegated many of the responsibilities to other staff members. Her personal ambition was to become a specialist and to adopt more of a consulting role. She also had a long-term perspective of becoming a publicly listed company.

4.11.3.2 Environmental influences

Customer liaison and communication were a very high priority. SBOM10 was very interested in maintaining a personal contact with customers and regularly met with them:

...customer care or sales is still part of my role and I'm good at it. And I enjoy that because a lot of that is the human interaction and I'm good at it, I love it, so I will be continuing to [be] creating that relationship. (SBOM10:2Q6)

SBOM10 met with a steering committee regularly to ensure that her project progress and actions were aligned with the goals of the organisation. Feedback

from this committee helped her to reset her time-management priorities as well as develop new opportunities.

Table 4.40: Summary of the influences on SBOM10's time-management behaviours

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Personal influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Described herself as happy and a listener - Worked in the business and on the business - Needed to be personally involved with customers - Desire to expand the business - Liked doing certain jobs and being involved in some of the technologies |
| <i>Environmental influences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer-driven; customer satisfaction - Planning mostly in the form of strategic planning, with the help of an advisory board - Use of electronic diary to prioritise and schedule |

4.11.3.3 Consequences

SBOM10 constantly monitored her performance and productivity and that of the organisation she had built. She was a “hands-on” manager who used regular reviews and meetings to ensure that project plans were adhered to. SBOM10's work-life balance was a consequence of the organisation and priorities that she had established. She adopted a disciplined approach to work, which helped ensure that these priorities were fulfilled; these included both important clients and family life:

Because I want my time for my family, I want to have a happy family that nothing can interfere with that. So therefore I'm happy to work around that, so it's not a burden or it's not about working late at night, so you just recognise what's important in your life and also that, yes, you know that there are certain clients that you want to go for, you want to work with and then you work hard for it. (SBOM10:2Q7)

SBOM10 appeared to manage stress well. She suggested that the main stress came about when other people controlled her time:

...only other people control my time when a project is running late....

(SBOM10:1Q9)

Table 4.41: Summary of the consequences of SBOM10's time-management behaviours

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Consequences</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Constant monitoring of effectiveness and productivity- Work-life balance was well planned and executed- Busy rather than stressed- Made her family life as important a priority as work life; in situations where there was a conflict, family won |
|----------------------------|---|

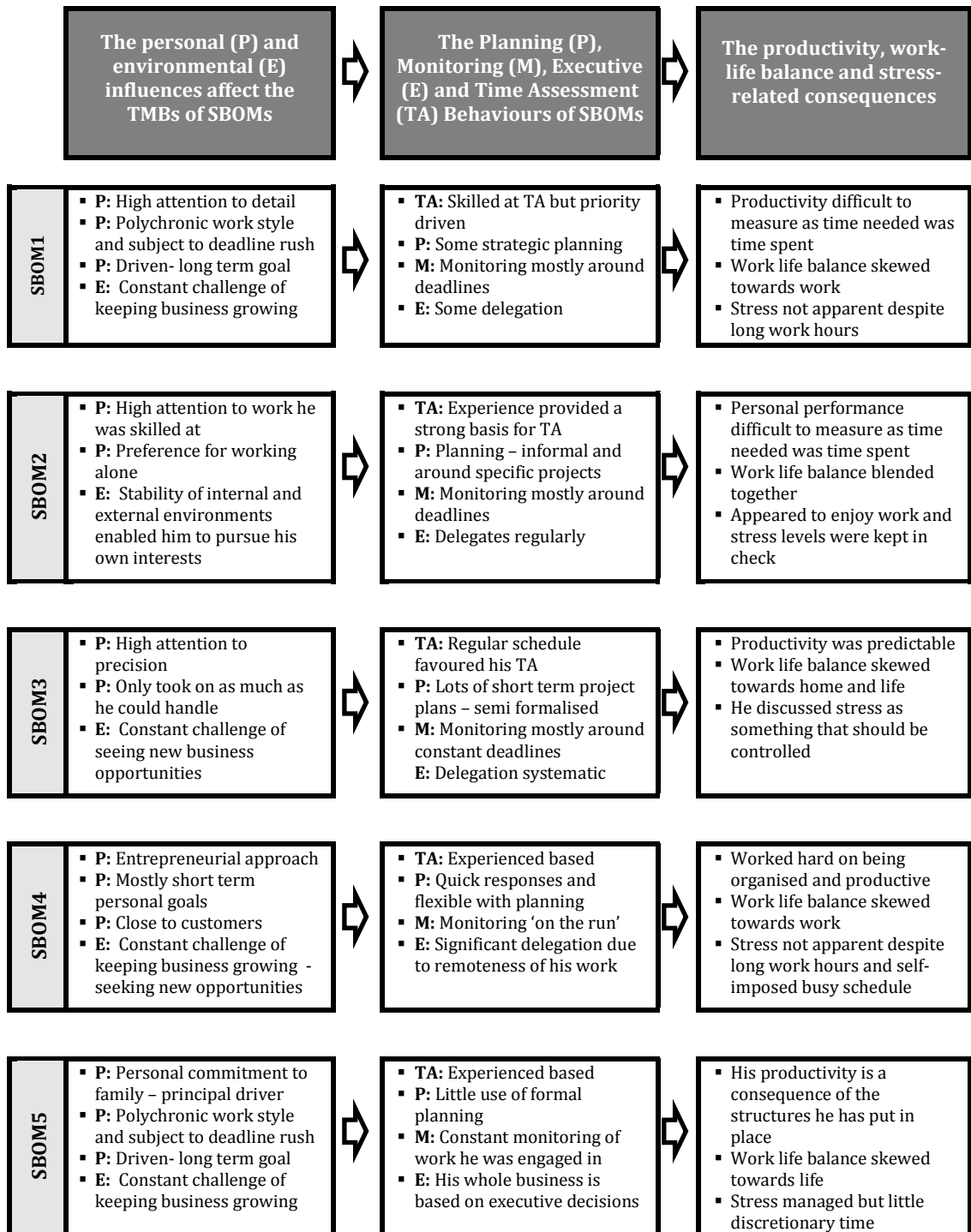
Table 4.42: Linking 'Case Study 10' quotations to 5 emergent themes

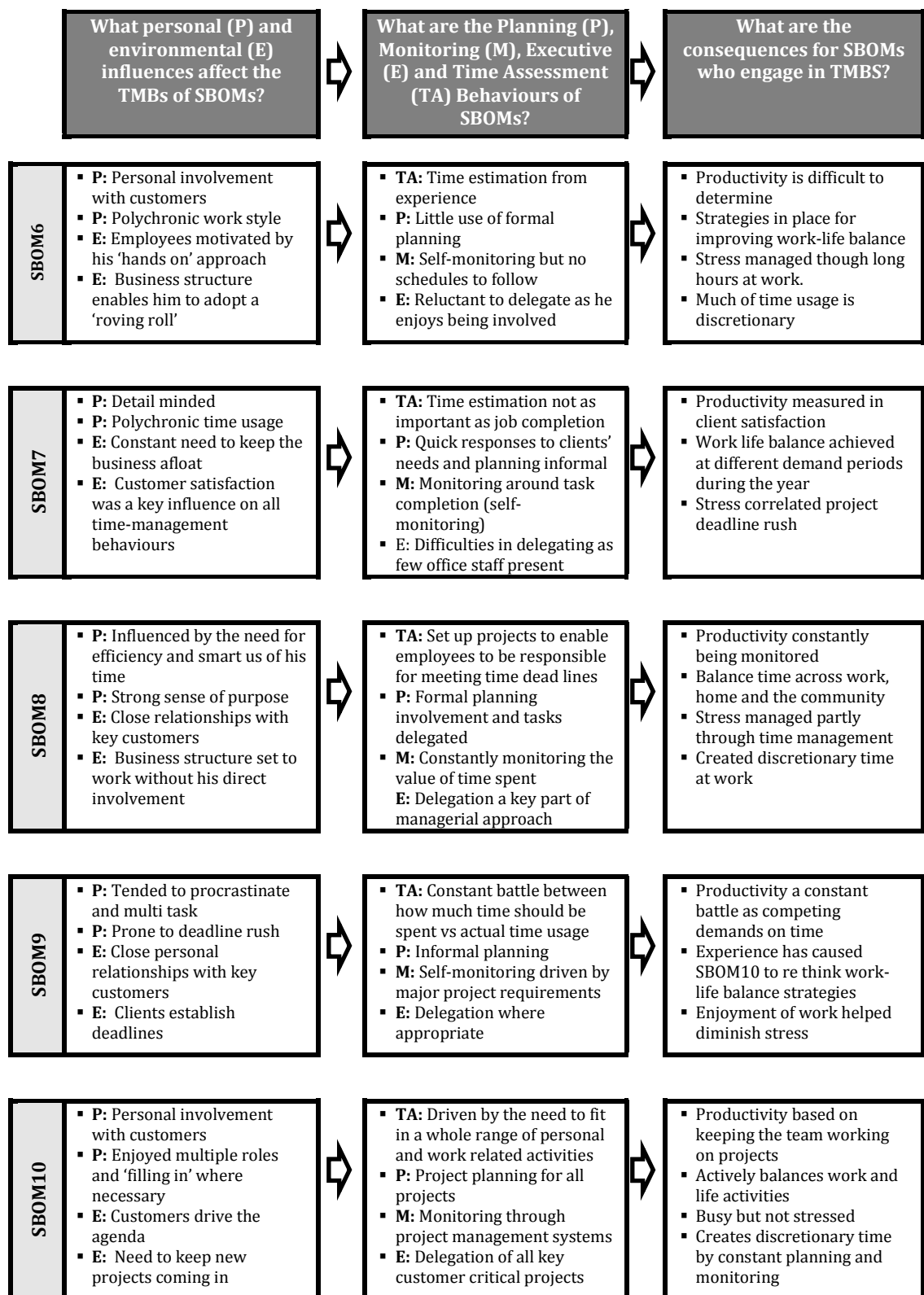
| Quotes | Codes | Emerging themes |
|---------|--|--|
| 10.1:Q1 | Background P (Gs) | <p>Examples of the five emerging themes:</p> <p>Personal preferences: SBOM10 works in every part of the business and, in particular likes to focus on the customer. She said, about her customer care: <i>...I'm good at it, I love it...(SBOM10:2Q6)</i></p> <p>Integrated: SBOM10's planning regimen enables her to free herself from some of the operational work. Some afternoons, work and life are integrated in such a way that optimises her use of time.</p> <p>Informal: SBOM10 formalises projects and plans but delegates many of the tasks to her staff. This enables her to be involved in a range of different activities that she is interested in. She described it as a: <i>Detailed project plan so I can free myself up. (SBOM1:10.1.1-10.1.2)</i></p> <p>Pragmatic: SBOM10 prioritises work tasks in order to be able to achieve a good level of work-life balance. She said: <i>I want to have a happy family and nothing can interfere with that. (SBOM10:1Q3)</i></p> <p>Flexible: SBOM9 worked well in a flexible environment where time management was used particularly in relation to deadlines brought about by client demands. He stated: <i>...and sometimes we work all night to get things done and we drop things. (SBOM9:1Q3)</i></p> |
| 10.1:Q2 | Background | |
| 10.1:Q3 | Con (Wlb) (Stress) | |
| 10.1:Q4 | P (Prior) | |
| 10.1:Q5 | P (Proj) | |
| 10.1:Q6 | EI (Team) | |
| 10.1:Q7 | TA (Te) (Mta) | |
| 10.1:Q8 | P (Proj) (Prior) (Sched) E (Del) | |
| 10.1:Q9 | EI (Cust) | |
| 10.2:Q1 | P (Sched) | |
| 10.2:Q2 | P (Sched) | |
| 10.2:Q3 | P (Gs) TA (Pvr) | |
| 10.2:Q4 | PI (Pers) | |
| 10.2:Q5 | PI (Wkpref) | |
| 10.2:Q6 | EI (Cust) | |
| 10.2:Q7 | Con (Wlb) Ei (Cust) | |
| 10.3:Q1 | E (Pro) | |
| 10.3:Q2 | E (Del) (Dev) | |
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4.12 THE TEN CASES & THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Figure 4.1 below is a representation of the themes that emerged from the in-depth qualitative interviews which were supported by time logs.

Figure 4.1: Case study data related to the three research questions





As can be seen from Figure 4.1, while the range of themes was consistent, e.g. delegation, work-life balance, the experience of each participant in relation to these themes varied. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

4.13 CROSS-ANALYSIS OF SBOMS' TIME-MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS

Table 4.43 summarises the SBOMs' time-management behaviours identified from the interviews. The shaded number e.g. '1' refers to SBOM1 and this pattern is repeated. The key below, used throughout the four cross-analyses of SBOMs' time-management behaviours, explains the use of 'H, M and L'.

H – High (High frequency of this behaviour by SBOM)

M – Medium (Medium frequency of this behaviour by SBOM)

L – Low (Low frequency of this behaviour by SBOM)

Table 4.43: Cross-analysis of SBOMs' time-assessment behaviours

| Time-assessment behaviours | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Time assessment was most evident in regard to deadlines and particular project requirements. | SBOMs | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| Experience and “gut feel” played an important role in time assessment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| Project planning, which was widely used by SBOMs, caused them to allocate time boundaries to work commitments. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | M | H | M | H | M | H | H | H | H | H |
| The value of time assessment was questionable amongst SBOMs who were more inclined to work until jobs were completed – with no regard to time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| Those SBOMs who were engaged in activities outside work appeared to have a stronger usage, and positive perception towards the value, of time assessment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | M | H | M | M | H | H | M | H | H | H |

SBOMs' time-assessment behaviours were largely based on personal experience. SBOMs' input into project planning benefitted from their awareness of the actual time that project related activities took.

Table 4.44: Cross-analysis of SBOMs' planning behaviours

| Planning behaviours | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| | SBOMs | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| There was a high perceived need for planning. | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| Planning was largely informal and “on the run”. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | M | H | H |
| Project management had widespread usage in checking progress against time deadlines. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | M | H | M | H | H | M | H | H | H | H |
| Set priorities were often challenged by competing priorities such as a change in customer requirement or a looming deadline. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| Importance frequently gave way to urgency. SBOMs often had to be reactive. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| Weekly and day-to-day planning was evident and widespread. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | M | H | M | L | M | H | H | H |
| Use of electronic calendars by SBOMs mainly to record critical events during the weeks or months ahead, where the SBOMs' physical presence and input was required. This allowed SBOMs to spend other, non-scheduled time on their own priorities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | M | L | H | H | H | H |
| Planning behaviours were, on the whole, integrated such that, for example, schedule could trigger the need for a different plan or a change of priorities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |

SBOMs considered planning to be the most important of their time-management behaviours. Having time to plan was an on-going challenge, as was the need to change plans rapidly in reaction to unplanned opportunities that arose.

Table 4.45: Cross-analysis of SBOMs' monitoring behaviours

| Monitoring behaviours | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Monitoring was often judged by the SBOM's following of, or adherence to, the to-do list. | SBOMs | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| Monitoring of others' time usage was much more prevalent than monitoring their own time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| Electronic calendars and access to the whole team's work schedules allowed for the monitoring of others' time usage. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| Individual monitoring of time only evident in relation to particular projects. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | M | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| Monitoring was hindered regularly by disruption and had to be flexible enough to deal with this. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| Delivering the end product often dominated time usage and marginalised the use of monitoring. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| SBOMs had a stronger sense of how they used time after the event (in retrospect). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | L | H | H | H | H | L | H | H | H | H |
| Some SBOMs did not monitor their own work time at all. They had ongoing work that preoccupied them and caused them to work until it was finished. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |

SBOMs monitored other employees' use of time much more than their own. Much of their monitoring was done in hindsight. Time monitoring was pushed to the background when an urgent deadline arose that requiring the SBOM's personal input.

Table 4.46: Cross-analysis of SBOMs' executive behaviours

| Executive behaviours | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Behaviours that avoided wasting time were pragmatic included making use of travelling time and meeting with a range of clients on the same trip. | SBOMs | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | M | H | H | H | H | M |
| Meetings were mostly conducted based on need. SBOMs, on the whole, didn't appear to want to have meetings unless directly with clients. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Delegating emerged as an ongoing challenge and dilemma for SBOMs. There was an overall tendency to take on too much work themselves, because they either enjoyed that work or considered it to be a priority. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | M | H | H | H | L | H | H |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Work-life balance was a priority amongst some of the SBOMs. Those who had a strong desire for this balance appeared to identify strongly with time-management behaviour. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | M | H | H | M | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| | | | | | | | | | | |

SBOMs engaged in a range of executive behaviours that enabled them to focus on their work or life priorities. Delegation was the most evident of the executive behaviours, though SBOMs constantly struggled with letting go of work for which they perceived their personal input was critical.

4.14 SUMMARY OF THE CROSS-ANALYSIS OF SBOMS' TIME-MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS

The SBOMs who participated in this study engaged in time-management behaviours with differing levels of rigour and commitment. Planning behaviour was the most widely identifiable and widely used of all of the behaviours that were discussed. Each of the SBOMs engaged in some form of work-related planning, but the general tendency was to focus on shorter-term planning. Spending time

planning was seen as a luxury, and there was an overall consensus that more time could be spent in planning. Planning was also less formalised in terms of set times and adhering to strict project-planning protocols. Meetings, for example, were often convened when an issue that needed participation emerged rather than at a set time each week. Planning was also triggered by reactions to events where, for example, a new opportunity arose and planning, in the form of project-planning was required to set out a course of action to ensure that delivery took place. Project planning and project management were quite evident and most apparent where monitoring took place.

Monitoring behaviour, which is co-dependent upon planning, is ultimately about monitoring planned activity. The participants expressed a certain amount of regret about intended activities that did not go to plan and consumed too much time. How individual SBOMs spent their time and whether or not they were spending time on the right priorities was a constant challenge for them. It was quite noticeable that the use of electronic calendars and reminders enabled SBOMs to be constantly vigilant in the scrutiny of their time use though they were generally quite flexible in how they used their time. This may partially explain why they tended to use things like an electronic calendar to block out major events and, to a lesser extent, use to-do lists.

SBOM executive behaviours designed to control or influence the level of involvement in ongoing activities were also quite evident in this study. Interestingly, this cohort of experienced SBOMs had developed their own individual ways of determining and controlling their involvement in time-consuming activities. Some separated themselves from the operations of the business, which enabled them to focus on their own preferred areas of expertise or satisfaction. Others were much more directly involved in the work of others and showed little willingness to delegate, particularly in regard to relationships with long and established customers.

Time-assessment behaviour was difficult to assess in this study. Whilst the time-log activity provided a comparison between planned and actual time, time

assessment was more reflective than planned. Time assessment is a valuable time-management behaviour if there is a conscious and deliberate attempt to adhere to the plan. In many instances, SBOMs did realise the time it took to complete events but were more interested in satisfying a customer demand, no matter how long it took, rather than sticking to the plan.

The broad scope of the Claessens (2009) four dimensional framework helped to facilitate the generation of rich data in this exploration of SBOMs' time-management behaviours. Five themes which were associated with the four dimensions of time management behaviour also became evident as a result this study. The themes which have been labelled: Personal, Integrated, Informal, Pragmatic and Flexible are evident in each of the case studies and examples were provided at the end of each. These five themes, which suggest that SBOMs' individualise their time-management behaviours, are discussed further in Chapter five.

4.15 CROSS-ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCES ON SBOMS' TIME-MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS

Tables 4.47 and 4.48 summarise the two most significant influences affecting the time-management behaviours of SBOMs.

Table 4.47: Cross-analysis of the personal influences on SBOMs' time-management behaviours

| Personal influences | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Personal influences (Section 2.3.1) of SBOMs strongly affect their decision-making, their approach to time management and the systems and processes they use. | SBOMs | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| SBOMs preferred to work in areas in which they had experience and expertise and generally found it difficult to delegate this work. Some SBOMs positioned themselves away from the main stream of the business to be able to focus on work that interested them. There was a desire to engage in monochronic activity although this was not always possible (Section 2.3.1.4). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | M | H | H | H | M | H | H |
| The SBOMs' personal and business goals influenced their time-management decisions both in relation to planning activities and in the prioritisation of work and life activities (Section 2.2.4.2). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| Procrastination (Section 2.3.1.2) was evident, although it was often a necessity brought about by a new opportunity, a change in priorities or a deadline. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | L | H | H | H | L | H | L |

Personal influences associated with SBOMs' personality and goals, as well as their ability to work either monochronically or polychronically, affected all of their time-management decisions.

Table 4.48: Cross-analysis of environmental influences on SBOMs' time-management behaviours

| Environmental influences | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| | SBOMs | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Business survival and growth was an ongoing issue that dictated much of SBOMs' day-to-day work (Section 1.2.1). | H | M | M | H | M | H | H | M | H | M |
| Customers exerted the most powerful external influence on SBOMs. Their changing needs and requirements directly affected SBOMs' time-management behaviours in terms of planning, prioritising, scheduling and meeting deadlines (Section 2.3.2.2). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | M | H | H | H | H | H |
| Technology enabled SBOMs to work at home and while travelling (Section 2.3.2.2). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | M | H | M | M | H | H | H | H |
| Insufficient time for planning, particularly more strategic planning was a constant source of concern amongst SBOMs (Section 2.2.4.2). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | M | H | H | H | M | H | M |
| Team support emerged as a strong factor in SBOMs' ability to manage their own time. The more capable and experienced the team, the more SBOMs could rely on support and the sharing of workloads (Section 2.3.2.1). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |

The need to respond to customers' ever changing expectations and the ability of their support team (employees) to deliver efficiently, influenced SBOM's time-management choices.

4.16 SUMMARY OF THE CROSS-ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCES ON SBOMS' TIME-MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS

The interview data has revealed that the two categories of influence had a significant effect on SBOMs' time-management behaviours. Personal differences amongst SBOMs, including their natural or acquired tendencies towards organisation and planning, appeared to have a strong bearing on their overall disposition towards time management. It was difficult to distinguish between personal and business goals, in respect to SBOMs, as often they were one and the same. Short and medium-term goals appeared to be a stronger force in the adoption of time-management behaviour than did longer-term goals.

Keeping the business afloat or expanding it was of primary concern to all the SBOMs. When opportunities arose, such as a project opportunity driven by a client, time management moved from "laissez-faire" to "all hands on deck". There were several instances where key elements of project management manifested themselves as formal time-management behaviour. Customer requirements, in particular, affected the time-management behaviours of SBOMs. The relationships that SBOMs had developed with key customers, often stemming from the beginnings of their businesses, meant that they wanted to personally maintain these connections. This was often at the expense of their personal time. SBOMs were, on the whole, most reluctant to delegate the necessary interactions that were deemed necessary to maintain such business and personal relationships. The support that the employees or team were able to provide an SBOM acted as an enabler for SBOM time-management behaviour. The more dependable, skilled and ready the team were to take on responsibility, the more likely an SBOM would depend on them for support and sharing of workload.

4.17 CROSS-ANALYSIS OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF SBOMS' TIME-MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS

Table 4.49 summarises the consequences of SBOMs adopting time-management behaviours.

Table 4.49: Cross-analysis of the consequences of SBOMs' time-management behaviours

| Consequences | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Productivity and performance drove many of the decisions that SBOMs made about maximising the value of their personal time usage (Section 2.4.1). | SBOMs | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| Work-life balance was a driving force for some SBOMs, whereas others let work dominate completely. Time management played a stronger role for those who had set goals concerning what they wanted to achieve in both work and life (Section 2.4.2). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | M | H | H | M | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Stress was well controlled amongst this group. There was a strong tendency to "get on with it" rather than to be stressed (Section 2.4.3). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Discretionary time created by effective time management created opportunities to expand the business and to pursue "more interesting work". (Section 2.4.1). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| | M | H | H | M | L | H | H | H | H | H |
| | | | | | | | | | | |

4.18 SUMMARY OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF SBOMS' TIME-MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS

Personal productivity was one of the key drivers of time-management behaviours. Improving an SBOM's individual output was regarded as the main reason for the adoption of such behaviours, particularly in regard to the adoption of planning and executive behaviours. The interviews also highlighted that work-life balance was a constant challenge for all the SBOMs. There was, however, a broad reaction to work-life balance issues. For some of the SBOMs, there was simply too much work to be done in the time that was available, and consequently the balance, more often than not, skewed towards work rather than life. Other SBOMs, who were more interested in keeping the business afloat rather than expanding it, maintained a steady equilibrium between work and life. In contrast, SBOMs who were most aware of their time and integrated time-management behaviours into every facet of their working days appeared to actively plan, monitor and control the balance.

From the comments made by the SBOMs interviewed, reducing stress did not appear to be a major consequence or driver of their time-management behaviours. Most experienced SBOMs appeared to have worked out coping mechanisms for dealing with stress, and in some instances, stress was a positive force that kept them focused on achieving targets. The creation of discretionary time, which is a consequence of time-management behaviours relating to productivity, was difficult to ascertain in this study, as SBOMs tended to fill their spare or created time with either activities that suddenly appeared or work that they were personally interested in.

4.19 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 4

The data analysed in this study has shown that time-management behaviours are a multi-faceted and complex phenomenon when considered in the context within which SBOMs operate. The influences on these behaviours are powerful and pervasive, shaping the way that time management is integrated into SBOMs' management style and approach as a whole. The consequences complete the picture about benefits and motivations of SBOMs in their adoption of time-

management behaviours. The following chapter provides a more comprehensive discussion of the themes that emerged from this study and reiterates the significance of understanding context in discussing time-management behaviour.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a detailed discussion about the time-management behaviours of SBOMs based on the data analysis presented in Chapter 4. Conclusions are reached about time-management behaviour and how it is influenced within the context of small business in Australia. Consequences of SBOMs' time-management behaviour are also examined. The findings, which were derived from analysis of the 30 interviews conducted with the participating SBOMs, are cross-referenced, where applicable, with a range of research and literature pertaining to time management and other management-related areas. A range of quotations, from the interviews, were used in this chapter to illustrate and support the discussions. Table 5.1 below shows the distribution of quotations from the ten participating SBOMs. As a result of this study, it has become evident that, while time management is still "not a well-defined construct" (Claessens et al., 2007, p. 270), it does play a significant, and perhaps sometimes undetected, role in the ongoing survival, success and well-being of SBMOs in Australia.

Table 5.1: Frequency of quotations used in Chapter 5

| SBOM1 | SBOM2 | SBOM3 | SBOM4 | SBOM5 | SBOM6 | SBOM7 | SBOM8 | SBOM9 | SBOM10 |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 5 |

5.2 RESEARCH QUESTION ONE:

What are the planning, monitoring, executive and time-assessment behaviours of small-business owner-managers in Australia?

The four dimensions of time-management behaviour, as articulated by Claessens, et al. (2009), formed the broad construct that both guided and provided a structure for this exploration. The four dimensions of time-management behaviour

that make up this model are: 1) assessment behaviours, 2) planning behaviours, 3) monitoring behaviours and 4) executive behaviours (Claessens et al., 2009).

The following discussion employs the four dimensions of time-management behaviour, and relates them to the experiences and context of SBOMs that were captured in this study. The order of the discussion about the four dimensions was decided on the basis of the frequency and importance placed on each dimension, as discussed by the SBOMs who participated in this study. Planning behaviours, which were the most prevalent time-management behaviours emerging from this study, are discussed first. Monitoring behaviours, which correlate directly with planning behaviours, are discussed in Section 5.2.2. Executive-behaviours, which are the proactive behaviours that enable SBOMs to influence their ongoing activity, are discussed in Section 5.2.3. The final part of this discussion, Section 5.2.4, focuses on time-assessment behaviours that directly or indirectly influence all of the other time-management behaviours.

5.2.1 SBOMs' planning behaviours

This discussion focuses on principal themes that emerged from the interviews. It considers: the need for planning; formal versus informal planning; the mechanics of planning; and urgency and importance in planning.

Planning behaviour, in the context of this research, includes goal-setting, planning tasks, prioritising, organising and scheduling. Planning, or the lack of planning, was the most frequently identified of the four time-management behaviours. This is consistent with the overwhelming emphasis on planning behaviours that is evident in both the popular literature on time management (Dodd & Sundheim, 2005; Fiore, 1989; Lakein, 1973; MacKenzie, 1997; Pausch, 2008) and the research-based literature (Claessens, Van Eerde, Rutte, & Roe, 2004; French, Kelly, & Harrison, 2004; Gibson & Cassar, 2002). Much of Macan's (1994) seminal work on time-management behaviour was predominantly concerned with the various facets of planning, which included the "mechanics of time management", and have been incorporated into this study under the umbrella of planning behaviours.

5.2.1.1 Planning behaviours: The need for planning

Without exception, each SBOM considered planning to have a crucial role in their business practice. The assumption that planning is beneficial to a business has gained considerable support in the literature (Gibson & Cassar, 2002). The findings of this study support the view that the busy and sometimes turbulent nature of the small-business workplace, combined with SBOMs' tendency to take on a heavy workload, leaves little time for planning (Cordeiro, 2013; Gibson & Cassar, 2002). Insufficient planning time was a constant source of frustration for several of the research participants. Yet the desire and interest of SBOMs to have an opportunity to spend time planning was quite evident:

Yeah, freeing up my time for strategic thoughts is a big issue here. (SBOM3:3)

Research has also suggested that planning does not take place at all in small business (Beaver, 2007; Hormozi et al., 2002; Stonehouse & Pemberton, 2002). Such research is not representative of the views expressed by the SBOMs in this current study. However, the ways planning took place in the context of small business were characterised by less formal organisation and more of a focus on short-term outcomes. On the whole, SBOMs carried out planning regularly or at critical time points surrounding foreseeable deadlines (such as the submission of proposals or the completion of projects).

Planning was also considered valuable from a pragmatic point of view, as a way of coping with some of the pressures that small businesses may experience:

So I still put aside time to plan what I'm going to do; otherwise I don't get anything done and the chaos just owns me. (SBOM4:3)

Evidence suggests that time-management behaviours, and planning behaviours in particular, help managers to reduce their stress and feel more in control of their time (Häfner & Stock, 2010). Planning is also associated with decision-making about priorities and goal-setting (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013). Decision-making is also an important factor in deciding whether to abide by the plan or change direction based on the present perceived value of an opportunity:

So what I basically do is do basic time management around calendars and tasks and make sure I've got the priorities of what really matters fixed in my mind. And then as things come in that compete with the planned activities that I know are important, then I'll basically choose to allow them in or not. (SBOM4:3)

The prolific use of electronic calendars amongst the SBOM cohort enabled them to block off periods of time for planned events (Section, 5.3.3.2). These acted as a general planning guide that enabled them to constantly evaluate their priorities and make decisions to change course depending on the changing circumstances.

5.2.1.2 Planning behaviours: Formal versus informal

While SBOMs regarded planning as essential for the survival and success of their small businesses, planning in this context was flexible, informal and pragmatic. One of the SBOMs described his approach to planning as “instinctive” rather than formally organised. Planning became integrated into his work rather than being an organised event that involved setting out goals and objectives.

At some stages I've tried more formal [planning] or targeting certain activities in certain ways, but after doing [a] not too different style of work-life for nearly 20 years, that planning activity was one of the overheads which became unjustified. It became unjustified because it became ingrained in my nature to do things in a particular way. (SBOM5:1)

He went on to say that formal planning caused him problems because the setting of deadlines created stresses that did not fit into the more flexible work culture that he had created. The tendency to informally plan may help to reduce what is termed “time pressure” and improve productivity (Moore & Tenney, 2012).

Another SBOM had a much more structured approach to planning:

I also allow myself nowadays to take time off once a month on the 15th. [This is the day] that I'm working on the business not projects, not in the business. (SBOM10:1)

Much of the discussions surrounding SBOMs' formal planning focused on project management. There were frequent references to project management in the interviews, whether it was explicitly classified by the SBOMs as project-management or simply reflected the characteristics of project management. Project management incorporates planning, milestones and schedules, and addresses risk factors that affect delivery times (Linetsky, 2008). On the whole, although SBOMs may have had significant input into the design and development of their project-management systems, they took a much more strategic, rather than operational, role in the everyday running of projects. This approach could also be categorised as an executive time-management behaviour (Section 5.2.3).

5.2.1.3 Planning behaviours: Present and future orientation

Small-business managers' business goals are a factor of the owner-manager's personal values and ambitions and the perceived opportunities that the environment offers (Morrison et al., 2003). This study found that SBOMs' goals, concentrated on shorter-term projects and deliverables. This is in line with research findings that show small businesses tend to be more operational than strategic in their overall outlook (Beaver, 2007). Although the SBOMs studied were generally not in survival mode, as evidenced by the length of service that most had accumulated, few discussed work that was more than three to six months in the future. While most of the SBOMs had well-considered ideas about the future of their businesses, the majority of their planning and prioritising reflected more present and pressing concerns. This was borne out in the time logs, which showed a preference for either technical or administrative work that they were personally involved with or meetings that they needed to attend. SBOM8 and SBOM10, however, were notable exceptions in their regular engagement in formal goal-setting and prioritising.

The description of a small-business manager's day as a mixture of competing priorities where impending deadlines, people issues and financial considerations are the order of the day (Botta & Bahill, 2007; O'Gorman et al., 2005), could not be a more accurate description of the SBOM participants in this research. On the

whole, the SBOMs had a fixed quantum of on-going work including administrative work, financial management, meetings, customer liaison and proposal writing. Their priorities were constantly being affected by changing circumstances and it was a natural part of everyday work to suddenly change focus and reprioritise.

The daily action plan, which is often referred to as a to-do list, was widely used amongst the participants in this study. Eight of the 10 participants used to-do lists regularly, most often in busy times, where it became a form of “on the run” planning, organising, monitoring and controlling. The to-do list provided a kind of guidance and measure of achievement in what could have been otherwise a busy and largely reactive day. SBOM1 commented on his daily action plan:

I'll have an action plan for each day. Like things I've got to action list of things I want to get this, this and this done.... I'll either, uh, the afternoon before or first thing in the morning make sure I know, okay what have I to try and tick off – um, and have a rough priority on it and then, um, follow that. (SBOM1:1)

The results of Macan's (1994) study, which examined the value of making lists found that, although it was speculated that such activity would improve participants' perception that they were in control of their time, it did not actually give them the perception of control over their time. It was speculated that this may have resulted from the negative perceptions associated with the non-achievement of scheduled to-do list activities (Macan, 1994). SBOMs in this study used to-do lists to make sure they did not forget important priorities. Control over their time was a separate issue and was affected by a range of other factors including: unplanned interruptions; unexpected time delays in completing tasks; and changing priorities based on changing customer requirements.

5.2.1.4 Planning: Urgent versus important

The Urgent versus Important Grid (Figure 5.1), which is sometimes referred to as the Covey Box or the Eisenhower Matrix, is a time-management matrix (Covey et al., 1994) often cited in the time-management literature (Claessens et al., 2007; Gordon & Borkan, 2014; Hellsten & Todd Rogers, 2009; Kearns & Gardiner, 2007;

König & Kleinmann, 2005). It is a useful construct to summarise the extent to which SBOMs' devote time to planning and organising in their everyday work.

Figure 5.1: Covey's time-management grid (Covey et al., 1994)

| | Urgent | Not urgent |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Important | QUADRANT I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crises - Pressing problems - Deadline-driven projects, meetings and preparations | QUADRANT II: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation - Prevention - Planning - Reflection - Empowerment - Ideas and creation |
| Not important | QUADRANT III: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needless interruptions, some phone calls - Some mail - Some meetings - Pressing matters - Popular activities | QUADRANT IV: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trivia - Junk mail - Some phone calls - Time wasters - Escape activities |

Quadrant II, which is essentially the planning and organising box, is identified by Covey et al. (1994) as being the quadrant in which managers should spend a significant amount of their time. However, it may also be the most challenging quadrant for SBOMs, as the reactivity and crisis associated with Quadrant I are constantly beckoning. A survey of 90 small-business owner-managers found that not only did managers work on average between 47 and 65 hours per week, but, of that time, only 4.5 hours were spent on personal analysis, reflection, developing

strategies and analysing results (Hankinson, 2000), which are the activities associated with Quadrant II. The SBOMs interviewed in this research appeared to operate out of Quadrants I and II; when overloaded by work, they strongly desired the luxury of more planning and organising time.

An adapted “Urgent Versus Important” grid representative of the current research is presented as Figure 5.3. Quadrant I, in relation to this study, is the quadrant of reaction, where SBOMs engage in a mixture of both necessary activities, such as responding to an urgent customer requirement, and other urgent activities that are either the result of the lack of organisation and planning or the proactive reaction to an opportunity or a changing deadline. The value of the “mechanics of time management”, with its emphasis on organising and scheduling (Macan, 1994) and reflecting much of the time-management popular literature, appears to be somewhat marginalised when circumstances cause planning to give way to urgency and deadline rush.

For the most part, the data captured in this research showed that SBOMs were constantly affected by interruptions, which are represented in Quadrants III and IV, but chose not to “waste time” with emails, unnecessary meetings and other distractions.

Figure 5.2: Adapted time-management matrix to include SBOMs' time-management behaviours

| | Urgent | Not urgent |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Important | QUADRANT I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project deadlines and deadline rush - Personally dealing with customers to maintain or gain new business - Unsatisfied customers - Meetings or consultations where input is required or unsatisfactory performance needs to be addressed - Proposal writing | QUADRANT II: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning (medium and long-term) - Developing new products or services - Business administration - Meeting with customers - Interpersonal communications - Team development - Entrepreneurial activity - Community engagement |
| Not important | QUADRANT III: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interruptions/interrupting staff who are inadequately trained - Family/home life issues - Email - Some meetings | QUADRANT IV: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Google - Email - Some phone calls |

5.2.1.5 Planning behaviour: An integration of the component parts

Planning behaviour, is at the heart of time management and incorporates goal-setting, prioritising, scheduling and organising (Claessens et al, 2009; Hellsten,

2012). In the context of the SBOM, planning for the most part, may be described as fragmented and carried out “on the run”. Although some of the participants engaged in strategic planning from time to time, there was an overall tendency to be involved in reactive planning to deal with circumstances of the moment, rather than of the future. The goals for many of the SBOMs changed daily, which caused reprioritisation and re-scheduling. Customer demands, in particular, as discussed below (Section 5.3.3.2), influenced SBOMs to reprioritise.

SBOM’s own planning could best be described as a mixture of all the component parts of goal-setting, prioritising, scheduling and organising. The sequence in which planning behaviours should take place is frequently presented as a linear process whereby, e.g. planning should take place before scheduling (Albert, 2014; Allen, 2003; Drucker, 1967; Lakein, 1973; MacKenzie, 1997; Varga, 2011). The experience of SBOMs in this study indicates that planning, for example, was much more iterative, flexible and an often haphazard process. The desire to schedule, for instance, inspired the need for planning which in turn inspired the need for goal-setting.

5.2.2 SBOMs’ monitoring behaviours

Monitoring behaviour is heavily dependent on planning. It is also widely recognised outside the discipline of time management as one of the key management dimensions along with planning, organising and controlling (Cole, 2013). Monitoring determines, to some extent, if the time-management behaviour, in particular the planning, was effective; it may therefore act as a form of self-regulation (Claessens et al., 2009). It also draws upon time-assessment behaviour by influencing the time allocated against the activities in a plan or schedule. What is important about monitoring behaviour for SBOMs is that monitoring enables decisions to be made about continuing with a certain planned activity or deciding to change priorities and focus on other activities.

5.2.2.1 Monitoring behaviours: The to-do list

Whereas planning may take the form of writing an action plan or a to-do list, monitoring is about checking to see if these actions have been completed within the specified time frames. One of the SBOMs described his attitude toward monitoring in the following way:

*I don't monitor the time other than if I'm not making it through my 'to do' list.
(SM1:3)*

In this case, the monitoring was more focused on the completion rather than the duration of priority tasks. SBOMs have significant control over the choice of work they undertake. One SBOM, typical of the majority of study participants, used an electronic diary to remind him about due actions or dates:

...Outlook is quite useful for me, the task list on Outlook, to remind me that there are clients I haven't called. I try and use my diary as a reminder, you know, to set up calls to people. And I usually try and plan, use a diary to plan a day.... (SBOM9:1)

Despite the sophisticated capacity of electronic diaries and devices that assist with time monitoring, SBOMs in this study showed, by their actions, a reluctance to benefit from the full benefits of such technologies (Quaddus & Hofmeyer, 2007).

5.2.2.2 Monitoring behaviour in the face of disruption

Interruptions, which are a normal part of working in an environment where the SBOM is close to both the customer and fellow employees, disrupt the best-laid plans (Kaufman-Scarborough & Lindquist, 1999). Some of the SBOMs in this study found that the idea of “observing one’s use of time while performing activities....” (Claessens et al., 2009) was a frustrating exercise due to interruptions. The following comment from one of the SBOM participants shows how interruptions cause other priorities to be delayed. After an urgent request for a quote from a client about a job, which had been discussed for some time, an action that involved this particular SBOM suddenly became urgent:

...well, all those things I wanted to do today have now been pushed aside by one client, a very important client. (SBOM2:1)

In this case the interruption, which became a great opportunity to build a relationship or gain more business, may be regarded as a very positive event, despite causing the SBOM to alter his plans considerably for the day. The SBOM's decision in this situation to push aside an existing workload in favour of an urgently requested task was one he was able to make by virtue of the fact that he was the manager (McMahon, 2007; Pansiri & Temtime, 2008). Also, this example, where an email caused the interruption, demonstrates how communications technology can push an otherwise planned and scheduled working day into disarray. The interruptions that technology can cause were evident throughout the interviews; this supports the view that technology, in some situations, actually creates interruptions rather than diminishing them (Epper & Fehr-Duda, 2012).

5.2.2.3 Does monitoring behaviour work for SBOMs?

SBOMs' monitoring behaviour proved in this research to be difficult to determine, as much of the monitoring behaviour seems to have taken place after the actual events themselves. The idea of monitoring behaviour, as an important dimension of time-management behaviours, is to enable the practitioner to make tactical adjustments, particularly in the event of interruption (Cole, 2013, pp. 22-23). Certain common activities for some of the SBOMs were not strictly monitored, such as impromptu meetings with customers, work completed at home and weekend work. The sentiment expressed below captures the feeling, as above, that some activities are going to take as long as necessary to achieve the desired outcome. There was a sense that if strict protocols were followed, in this case a meeting, the desired outcome would not be achieved. SBOM9 commented:

I mean, meetings, we try to be disciplined around saying if we're going to have a meeting it takes as long as it takes. (SBOM9:1)

The comment "it takes as long as it takes" in some ways marginalises that value of monitoring in respect to time management. Monitoring behaviour is designed to

help SBOMs complete scheduled activity within the schedule (Claessens et al., 2009). In many instances throughout the interviews, monitoring of one's use of time appeared to give way to, what McKenzie (1997) describes as "the rush to meet a deadline", or, more succinctly, "deadline rush" (König & Kleinmann, 2005). Covey argues that this rush is a consequence of the lack of planning and organisation (Covey et al., 1994). SBOMs, for the main part, were accountable to themselves for monitoring and were more inclined to monitor others' time-management behaviours rather than their own.

5.2.3 SBOMs' executive behaviours

Claessens et al. (2009) added the "executive" dimension to their existing dimensions of time-management behaviour. Although the original definition and explanation of this term included two main areas of focus - behaviours that avoid wasting time and motivation to carry out the plan - this term still requires further elaboration (Claessens et al., 2009). Using the general definition of "executive behaviours" as those that "aim at influencing on going activity" (p. 25), the area of "delegation" was also considered worthy of addition to this definition.

5.2.3.1 Behaviours that avoid wasting time

Reframing Claessens et al.'s (2009) concept of "behaviours that avoid wasting time", a more appropriate phrase for this research paradigm is "time-saving behaviours". Each SBOM displayed different time-saving behaviours. A consistent theme emanating from the interviews in this study was the constant need to save time. The comment below is typical of the approach used by SBOMs to save time related to attending meetings:

If I'm going to be essentially doing a meeting, I try and have all my meetings in the city so I'm not moving around between meetings or have it in a chunk at least rather than spend time going to and fro by meeting. (SBOM9:2)

Meetings are frequently cited in the literature as having a significant potential to waste time (Arnold & Pulisch, 2004; Macan, 1996; Ruggiero, 2010), and the SBOMs welcomed any action that would make meetings more efficient. This research

highlighted two findings in relation to meetings in the context of small business. First, for the most part, very few internal meetings were held amongst staff within the actual businesses, and those that were held were chaired by the SBOM. There appeared to be a strong awareness amongst the SBOMs interviewed that meetings could waste time; as a result, they were held on an as-needed basis rather than as a regularly scheduled event. Second, SBOMs most frequently had meetings with their customers “one on one”. This helped them maintain a personal relationship with the client, and whatever time was needed for these meetings was considered to be time well spent.

5.2.3.2 Motivation to carry out the plan

SBOMs’ strong motivation to carry out their plans was, in some cases, driven by established longer-term goals, despite managers’ tendency to spend their time ‘putting out fires’ (Pansiri & Temtime, 2008). The desire to expand the business sufficiently and employ enough staff to enable the SBOM to move away from direct involvement in the operational aspects of administration, human resource management and finance, was at the heart of much of their motivation to achieve their business plan.

The close relationship that SBOMs had developed with customers that was shown in the interviews, and which is further below (Section 5.3.3.2) below, also motivated SBOMs to ensure that planned deliverables and their corresponding deadlines were met. SBOM9 commented:

...typically, for us, clients always take priority, and the level of service that we provide to our clients is high. And so everything else comes second, and that may not be the most efficient way of running a business, but in our world that’s just the nature of the beast. (SBOM9:1)

For some of the SBOMs, the outcome of executive behaviour was the reward of discretionary time, the time that is left over after all other priorities are attended to (Goodin et al., 2005). It became evident that the majority of SBOMs interviewed viewed either “growth of the business” or “finishing a huge pile of work” as a

means of refocusing on activities that either suited their skill base more or would yield better outcomes.

5.2.3.3 Delegation

Delegation enables subordinates to make a certain number of decisions themselves (Yukl & Ping Ping, 1999). In relation to time management, SBOMs approached delegation quite individually. Some of the SBOMs regarded delegation as a means of focusing on more-strategic parts of the business (Kamal & Raza, 2011). The comment below attests to this:

I delegate the workshop planning, the workshop running. All the goods in and out, that's all someone else's responsibility. I don't get actually involved in that sort of thing. I just tend to stick with the most strategic ends of the business.
(SBOM3:3)

Delegation was also distinguished from “dumping”, and one SBOM thought seriously about delegating:

...it's really easy to just flick-pass stuff onto other staff when you know they can deal with it.... The switching costs and grief associated with flicking it on is almost selfish (SBOM4:2)

The most common feeling about delegation that came from the interviews was that it was difficult to let go of work with which they were familiar and in which they were competent. Managers who chose not to delegate continued to engage in routine or operational activities themselves (Kamal & Raza, 2011). SBOM8 commented:

Delegation is something that has not come easily to me. I have trust issues, always have had. (SBOM8:1)

Whereas, another SBOM commented, in relation to routine or operational matters:

I've stepped back from the physical purchase of stock as well as the ordering.
(SBOM6:1)

SBOM6 also recognised, that due to physical limitations, delegation became a necessity:

...from a physical point of view in that my hands are now starting to get really pained and they make noises and those sorts of things and they hurt a lot.
(SBOM6:1)

Delegation is clearly an executive time-management behaviour, as it influences ongoing activity and, if done properly, enables the SBOM to work on higher-level and strategic issues facing the business.

5.2.4 SBOMs' time-assessment behaviours

5.2.4.1 What are the time-assessment behaviours of SBOMs?

Time-assessment behaviour, in relation to SBOMs, includes all of the behaviours and acquired skills associated with their ability to accurately estimate and measure the time it takes to perform work-related activities (Claessens et al., 2009; Hellsten, 2012). Time assessment is also related to being aware of time as it is happening and analysing the use of time (Hellsten & Todd Rogers, 2009). Time assessment is a prerequisite of planning and plays a key role in monitoring (Claessens et al., 2009), as it provides a basis for determining the duration of planned activities against estimated time intervals. In short, it provides the planner with the ability to make accurate assessments of the likelihood of completing a project within a specified time period. Time assessment also informs monitoring and executive behaviours (Claessens et al., 2009).

Throughout the course of this study, it became apparent that although time assessment is referred to as a behaviour (Claessens et al., 2009), it is perhaps better described as a skill or set of skills that SBOMs acquire from experience, by trial and error. This is borne out below in the comments by one of the participants about "gut feel". A number of sub-headings have been used to describe the various elements of time-assessment behaviour, which represent the principal themes that emerged from the study.

5.2.4.2 The role of experience and “gut feel” in time assessment

The research participants used their past work-related experiences such as meetings that were attended, interactions with clients and staff and personal work on projects that had time deadlines as the basis for their time assessment. Specific incidences were related during the interviews that enabled them to reflect on the accuracy of their estimates of the time it took to undertake certain tasks. One participant said that he usually allowed certain times for meetings, and that his assessment of the time these meetings took had always been quite accurate. His ability to assess time was described as:

...just a gut feeling for how long I should allow for that. (SBOM2:1)

He also pointed out during the interview that he tried to have a participatory role in the meetings rather than run the meetings himself. This gut feeling was a common element of the time-assessment behaviours described in the interviews. It appears that experience in performing tasks over a long period of time provides a strong basis for an SBOM to judge the length of work-related activity. It is best summed up by the comment:

I generally have a pretty good sense of how long things will take, what I can plan for a certain time or what I should not be attempting in a certain time window. So from a point of view of task and time perception, yes, I'm very good at it. (SBOM5:3)

While the SBOM participants in this study perceived their own assessment of their own time-assessment behaviours to be quite accurate, research suggests otherwise. In their experimental study, Forsyth and Burt (2008) concluded that planned task duration is often underestimated. This has been referred to as the “planning fallacy” where the actual time a task takes is more than the time allocated. Their overall conclusion was that if tasks are better segmented rather than generally grouped together, there is a closer correlation between estimates and reality. However, they also recognised a factor that is applicable to SBOMs, which is that the likelihood of spending too much time segmenting tasks (breaking

them down into their component parts), was impractical in every day work situations (Forsyth & Burt, 2008).

Perceived control over time is associated with a range of personal benefits including well-being and a sense that achievement of goals is possible (Claessens et al., 2004; Häfner & Stock, 2010). The interplay between time-assessment behaviour and control over time is not fully understood, yet perceived control over time is regarded as one of the strongest correlates of time-management behaviour (Hellsten, 2012). Time assessment, in the context of experienced SBOMs, appeared to work in the background, and was used mostly in formal planning and project management where the breaking down or segmentation which Forsyth and Burt (2008) refer to, leads to more accurate plans and on time deliverables.

5.2.5 Summary of SBOMs' time-management behaviours

Time-management behaviours, which included planning, monitoring, executive and assessment behaviours (Claessens et al., 2009), were evident in various degrees amongst all 10 SBOM research participants. The most clearly identifiable time-management behaviours were those elements of planning that included organising and scheduling and to some degree the to-do list. Many of these behaviours were identified by Macan (1994) as being representative of time management in the popular literature and in time-management training programs.

Plans often gave way to new opportunities or urgent requirements, both of which were usually generated by their customers. There was a strong tendency amongst the SBOMs to deal with critical matters themselves, and quite a reluctance to delegate. Monitoring, which is supposed to take place at the time, frequently gave way to urgency. This meant that SBOMs would, for example, use to-do lists to monitor their planned actions within time frames, but these planned actions would only be completed when the environment was stable.

Executive behaviours may be better described as strategic time-management behaviours or time-saving behaviours. There was clear evidence from the interviews that SBOMs engaged in executive behaviours in positive ways, such as

using travel time for phone calls or choosing to use public transport so that work could be done while travelling. Also, they chose not to engage in time-wasting activities such as attending long meetings or pursuing business ventures that brought them little return. The participants were experienced managers, and they had all developed their own executive behaviours, which may explain, in part, why they had survived in business for so long.

While time assessment is a key skill that is critical for formal project planning, every day planning such as using a to-do list tends to be based more on instinct or gut feel based on past experience. SBOMs in this study tended to have a positive perception about their own ability to assess the time it should take to complete allocated tasks. It remains a difficult area to measure as SBOMs also showed a tendency to spend as much time as it takes to complete a task and their time estimation became somewhat redundant. The time-assessment behaviours of SBOMs are certainly an area that would benefit from further research.

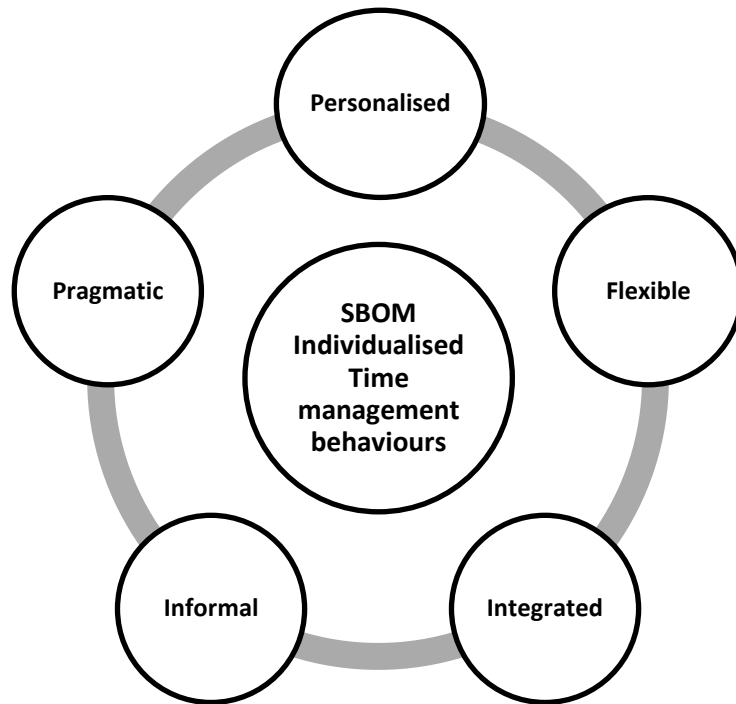
This study acknowledges the utility of the Claessens et al.'s (2009) time-management behaviour analysis framework. This framework, based on their extensive literature review, proved to be an appropriate mechanism for this qualitative, exploratory study. Applying this framework to the data from the SBOM interviews revealed five characteristics that describe the way in which SBOMs manage their time in the context of small business. A synthesis of the five characteristics summarises how SBOMs individualised time-management behaviour to suit their particular situations and needs:

1. **Personalised** – SBOMs adopted specific time-management behaviours and adapted them to align with their personal style, needs and ambitions. Personalised preferences reflected the work they were interested in, the work they enjoyed and work that involved a high level of technical expertise (Refer to Table 3.5). This adaptation of time-management behaviour was influenced by SBOMs' personal differences, the environment within which they worked and the likely consequences of the behaviours themselves (Sections 5.3 and 5.4).

2. **Integrated** – SBOMs integrated their time-management behaviours into their overall management approach in such a way that these behaviours were not readily differentiated from other management and operational behaviours. Integration also included preferences for multi-tasking and their amalgamation of work and life issues.
3. **Informal** – SBOMs' planning, prioritising and scheduling were often carried out informally and "on the run". This was characterised by SBOMs facilitation of informal meetings with the people involved and some degree of ad-hoc planning. The informal approach, adopted by SBOMs, saw less formal scheduling and planning and less formal management practices.
4. **Pragmatic** – SBOMs used time management only when they considered it to be an expedient and practical way of achieving their goals. They did not engage in time-management behaviours for their own sake. Few SBOMs, for example, wrote to-do lists every day, but they did tend to write them when a major deadline was looming.
5. **Flexible** – and opportunistic – time management had to be flexible to counter the continued disruption to the planned course of events, and SBOMs needed to be ready to take advantage of sudden opportunities to engage in time-management behaviours. There was a strong willingness to adapt to changing circumstances and the flexibility to respond to changing customer needs and requirements.

The individualisation of SBOMs' time-management behaviours is depicted in Figure 5.3:

Figure 5.3: Characteristics of the individualisation of SBOMs' time-management behaviours



5.3 RESEARCH QUESTION TWO:

How do personal and environmental factors influence the time-management behaviours of small-business owner-managers?

5.3.1 Influences on SBOMs' time-management behaviours

The second research question addresses the influences that affect SBOMs' time-management behaviours. Two broad categories of influencing factors that emerged from the data were classified as personal, and environmental.

5.3.2 Major Influence 1: Personal influences

5.3.2.1 Personality traits and individual differences

The unique personalities of the 10 SBOMs, who participated in this study, played a significant role in influencing their time-management behaviours. The literature highlights that the personal influence of the business owner has a significant effect on factors such as the growth and success of the business (Anderson & Ullah, 2014; Andersson & Tell, 2009; Morrison et al., 2003). This study revealed that the SBOMs' personal differences played a significant role in both their approach to time management and how they perceived the value of time management.

In the interviews, personal influences were manifested in regards to the SBOMs' work preferences. This supports Beaver and Jennings' (2005) suggestion that the business is often an extension of an individual's personality. Time-management behaviours even appeared to be interwoven with the personalities of the SBOMs. The need for SBOMs to be personally involved in detailed technical work, in which they had expertise, was quite evident in most of the research participants. SBOM 2, for example, was keen to separate himself from the operational aspects of the business, and eventually consult back to it, given his particular expertise. The longer-term goal for a number of the SBOMs, similar to that of SBOM2, was to gradually move away from the main stream of the business and pursue their personal interests related to the business. Davidson's (2009) life cycle model may also be applicable to the target group of this research, who were experienced

SBOMs, where the final stage of the business life cycle sees the manager delegating more and working less. There was however little evidence to suggest that their businesses were any less “chaotic, unstructured and unpredictable” (O’Gorman et al., 2005, p. 3).

Other personal influences also affected SBOMs’ time-management behaviour. The comments below are typical of the SBOMs’ self-analysis:

Open, fun, trustworthy, “can-do”, a calculated risk taker. And I do think that yes, because of the general knowledge - and also the contact I have is good, because it’s very enriching in whatever I do. (SBOM10:2)

These comments may give a further insight into how that SBOM may conduct time management. Trustworthiness, for example, is also associated with delegation and the ability to empower other employees to carry out work that would otherwise be carried out by the SBOM themselves (Pech, 2009; Yukl & Ping Ping, 1999). The “can-do” attitude, in the case of this SBOM, was a reflection of that person’s preference for hands-on activity, which may be interpreted as reluctance to delegate.

Further personal characteristics that influenced SBOMs’ time-management behaviours included their relationships with their fellow employees. Depending on other employees to get things done is a critical condition of delegation (Section 5.2.3). One of the participants revealed that he did not relate to people very well. He set up the business from home and was able to deal with his fellow consultants by phone or Skype, and only dealt with them on an as-needed basis. This enabled him to dedicate his time to both his work and his family commitments. His business was both an extension of his personality and a reflection of his life circumstances.

5.3.2.2 Personal priorities: Procrastination, deadline rush and time-discounting

Although participants admitted to procrastination, it was mainly in regard to administrative work that was relatively important but of low urgency to them. The

research revealed that SBOMs procrastinated about issues that they considered to be of low value (Tracey, 2013). Procrastination is often associated with negative consequences; words used to describe it in the literature include “dysfunctional phenomenon” and a “self-regulatory failure” (Häfner, Oberst, & Stock, 2014). SBOM7’s comment about procrastination however, is more in line with a strategic interpretation of procrastination that ensures a better quality outcome if more time is taken to complete an important task (Temtime & Pansiri, 2004). This strategic form of reprioritising is only worthwhile if there are no negative consequences associated with the procrastinated decision:

I feel as though I can procrastinate without any negative impact or consequence I will procrastinate until the point where I feel as though I really need to make a decision right now. (SBOM7:2)

SBOM7’s response also highlights the connection between decision-making and procrastination. This kind of decisional procrastination is also linked with the personality trait of perfectionism (Knaus, 2000). There was a strong consensus amongst SBOMs about the need to make quick decisions when priorities change. Procrastination may simply be the only perceived option in such a situation:

I’ll firstly think about whether I can procrastinate on something or whether I actually need to make a decision right now. (SBOM7:2)

SBOMs, who tend to prefer to make quick decisions, may need to procrastinate to understand both the consequences and contextual implications of their decisions:

I do make decisions fairly quickly but I do like to understand what the inputs and the context of the decision are. (SBOM8:2)

In terms of time management, procrastination may indicate an unstructured approach to organisation (Bond & Feather, 1988). The SBOMs who participated in this study were, as Chu and Choi (2005) term “active procrastinators”, and were for the most part, opportunistic and procrastination was more of a conscious re prioritisation.

Closely associated with procrastination is “time-discounting”. Time-discounting for SBOMs was also associated with the perceived gains caused by sudden change of priority. The benefits or trade-offs associated with receiving a lesser reward sooner compared to receiving a more significant reward later are relevant in the context of small business (Frederick et al., 2002). Taking immediate action to, for example, shore up cash flow or quickly respond to customer enquiries caused SBOMs to act and react more immediately in some situations. Medium to long-term priorities may be postponed because of such reactions. The disproportionate amount of responsibility for planning and strategic decision making that is apparent amongst small-business managers (Woods & Joyce, 2003) as well as their desire for autonomy (Carter & Jones-Evans, 2009) enables SBOMs to make independent decisions based on the changing circumstances and the uncertainty of work environments (Beaver & Jennings, 2005).

Deadline rush, on the other hand, was quite a widespread experience among the participating SBOMs. Each of the participants acknowledged that, as projects came to a conclusion and deliverables were due, the pace of work in the business as a whole and their personal workload increased significantly. This phenomenon was best described by SBOM7, where he describes having to push everything else aside to suddenly react to and act on an urgent project that required his undivided attention:

I had to put a number of things on hold to be properly prepared for this thing with Company X. (SBOM7:3)

The benefit of working on this project and pushing everything else aside, from his perspective, far outweighed the negative effects of non-delivery or non-completion of other projects that were competing for his time. SBOM9 described the way he began to work as an approaching deadline loomed as “running like mad bastards” (SBOM9:3). The rush, associated with deadlines, was more prevalent amongst SBOMs who either took on too much personal responsibility for the meeting of a deadline. SBOM8’s commented:

“Delegation is something that has not come easily to me, I have trust issues....(SBOM8:1)

This research highlighted the complexities associated with the causes and effects of procrastination in the context of small business. It was evident that SBOMs do engage in procrastination, but it does not appear to be “dysfunctional procrastination” (Knaus, 2000); rather it seems to be a necessary approach to make better decisions, postpone decisions and to enable them to reprioritise when circumstances change. SBOMs, who tend to take on too much work themselves, procrastinate for survival and not through laziness or indecision. The deadline rush may be the result of procrastination, but also may be the result of responding to an opportunity that will have positive benefits for the business (Häfner et al., 2014). The “effective use of time while performing certain goal directed activities” (Claessens et al., 2007), which is a typical representation of time-management definitions in the literature, is challenged when the goal posts keep changing. Future studies in time-management behaviour may well focus on the benefits associated with procrastination in the context of small business, rather than simply portraying it as negative behaviour with negative consequences.

5.3.2.3 Monochronicity and polychronicity

This study has indicated that polychronicity (simultaneous multitasking) was necessary, in some circumstances to effectively manage a small business. The condition of smallness which, in part, is attributed to a lack of resources (Anderson & Ullah, 2014) may contribute to both the inevitability and necessity for SBOMs to engage in polychronic behaviour. For the SBOMs who partook in this study, multitasking was an occupational reality rather than a conscious decision. The descriptions of time-management behaviour as individualised by SBOMs (Section 5.2.5), are not dissimilar to the way polychronicity is described in the literature: “the accomplishment of multiple and sometimes simultaneous tasks, interruptions and sudden changes in priorities” (Kaufman-Scarborough & Lindquist, 1999). Though it was necessary to multi task when situations demanded, such as the lack of resources, or co-occurring events such as responding to a customer’s request

while writing a proposal and being interrupted by an employee, there was a tendency amongst the experienced SBOMs who participated in this research to prefer a more monochronic approach to their workplace activities:

I have the kind of personality where working on one or two things in more depth and more detail suits me better, and so this working on lots of things at a reasonable level of detail doesn't really suit me that well. It's just the nature of our beast now. (SBOM9:1)

In relation to time-management behaviour (Section 5.2), SBOMs showed a tendency to be involved in work that both suited their personal interest and enabled them to use their technical skill base. While some level of polychronic behaviour is necessary to manage a business, the above example was typical of the participants, who showed a preference towards polychronic behaviour. Where SBOMs did come into the office on weekends or take work home, they expressed a desire to spend time on that work without interruption. Polychronicity, which was evident in the busy work days of SBOMs, interfered with the achievement of their goals (Waller et al., 1999), and was replaced by working in an environment that enabled monochronic behaviour. SBOM2 stated:

Well, at the moment it's very busy. In fact I did come into work on Saturday and worked about four or five hours at my desk.... (SBOM2:1)

The data, gathered in this research, also supported the suggestion that the use of electronic mediums encouraged multitasking (Rosen, 2008). Much of the SBOMs' multitasking behaviour was in response to emails requesting updates, quotes and clarifications from their customers. This was happening while they were focusing on other projects.

Polychronicity was evident in the behaviour of all the SBOMs, yet most of the group, strongly aspired to spend much more time engaging in monochronic behaviour. The need for SBOMs to engage in polychronic activities may also be related to their capacity to delegate (Section 5.2.3.3) and the sometimes chaotic

environment that accompanies deadline rush. SBOM6 positioned himself in the business to have a multi-tasking role which he described as 'roving'. (SBOM6:2)

He described his day as:

... it's a day of interruptions a lot of the time. (SBOM2:1)

Having delegated many of his former tasks to other employees meant that his preference for polychronic behaviour also suited the environment within which he worked. The comment below suggests that his ability to handle a variety of different everyday problems supports the case for the value of polychronic behaviour. This is based on the assumption that other employees are engaged in monochronic behaviours.

If there's a problem then that's my role, it just gets flick-passed, so there you go, solve this. (SBOM6:1)

Time management's disciplined approach to act on what was planned (Covey, 1991), assess the time it takes to complete tasks and make more decisions about how ones time is spent (Claessens et al., 2009) may assist SBOMs to realise the benefits associated with both monochronic and polychronic behaviour .

5.3.3 Major Influence 2: Environmental influences

5.3.3.1 Internal environmental influences

A most significant internal environmental pressure influencing SBOMs' time-management behaviours was caused by their unceasing focus on the ongoing survival and growth of their businesses (Morrison et al., 2003; Surdez et al., 2012). The continued need for achievement and control (Carter & Jones-Evans, 2009), remain strong forces that influenced their time-management decisions causing the SBOMs in this study to prioritise their own work activity around the achievement of new business opportunities whilst controlling the amount of work they do personally. SBOM8's comment summed up how many of the SBOMs considered their current position to be:

We are nowhere near where we need to be. (SBM8:2)

The desire for growth, evident in some of the SBOMs dictated much of how their time was managed:

I mean, we're trying to build a seriously world-class company, and one that I can hope will be one of the potentially top dozen Australian technology companies ever to emerge. There's a lot to it. It's a big, ambitious goal. So in that sense it's kind of, I guess, a lot of work goes into that. (SBOM4:1)

The perceived lack of time to expand the business and seek more opportunities experienced by some SBOMs is contrasted with the experiences of SBOMs who regarded profitability as an opportunity and a means of devoting more time to strategic issues. This opportunity was explained by SBOM8:

We are profitable and that makes that decision-making process a lot, lot easier. And it does, it frees you up to make strategic decisions. It frees you up to evaluate things like acquisitions and stuff like that, and you can literally make very, very rapid decisions because you know where you are financially. (SBOM8:2)

The findings of this study support the view that the busy and sometimes turbulent nature of the small-business workplace, combined with SBOMs' tendency to take on a heavy workload, leaves little time for business planning (Cordeiro, 2013; Gibson & Cassar, 2002). When he was discussing the time needed to expand his business, one of the SBOMs highlighted the consequence of not having enough time for such growth activities:

When you're talking about future business, what I'm talking about is getting out there and scoping out what might be available in the marketplace. Yeah, it does worry me that I don't get enough time for that. (SBOM3:2)

Davidson's (2009) life cycle model, as described in Section 2.3.2.1, suggested that in the latter stages of the business life cycle, the manager delegates more and potentially works less. While this was on the mind of most of the SBOMs who took

part in this research, it was far from being realised. Whilst some of the SBOMs were delegating more to free up their time for more business planning activity, there was little evidence to suggest that they were actually working less or that this would change in the near future. SBOMs, by their nature, have fewer resources at hand than larger businesses and lack knowledge, time and capability (Anderson & Ullah, 2014). SBOM1 felt this frustration in relation to his attempts to develop the selling skills of his staff:

...you really need to get more growth in clients, and the challenge is [that] I don't have anyone in the business that's got the experience to really go out there and sell. (SBOM1:1)

In a qualitative study of ten small businesses, Perks (2011), found that conflict was caused by poor organisational structures and delegation. The recommendation coming out of this research was that small businesses would benefit from formalising human resource structures and better clarify the roles of employees (Perks, 2010). SBOMs have the opportunity to focus on more strategic issues when they are able to delegate effectively to their work teams, providing these teams have a strong sense working together and time awareness (Pech, 2009; Yukl & Ping Ping, 1999). The challenge faced by SBOMs in this study is best summed up in the following comment:

And when I look at the people I have got, we, um, we try very hard to allocate them out to get things done. But a lot of it still falls back on my shoulders to do the final, you know, adjustments tuning and whatever. (SBM1:1)

Transferral of task or authority requires that the people are trained and competent (Perks, 2010). SBOM3 stated:

Not unless they were productive and trained. Just throwing people at it just doesn't work in this business. (SBOM3:2)

Delegation, in the context of small business, is a necessary determinant of business success to enable managers to focus on other more strategic issues (Kamal & Raza,

2011). However, the capability and motivation of other employees to take up challenges and work independently is also an internal factor that influences the time-management behaviours of SBOMs. A shared understanding about project requirements, including time deadlines along with a team's involvement in the planning and execution of such projects improves the likelihood of achieving goals (Gevers et al., 2009).

The SBOMs in this study were general reluctant to delegate too much responsibility to other staff as they felt that their expertise, in what they considered the more important activities, could not be delegated. Whether it was due to a lack of training, experience or motivation on the part of the employees, SBOMs tended to retain rather than to share responsibilities with their team. There were a few notable exceptions such as SBOM8, whose time at work was regulated by his need to be involved in other activities (Section 4.9) and as a consequence, he spent much of his time training employees to be able to perform independently of him.

The constant demands associated with keeping a business afloat and/or growing the business; the structure of the business; the centralised control of activity by SBOMs; as well as, the capacity of employees to share managerial, technical and operational responsibilities; are all internal influences on the time-management behaviours of SBOMs. They affect an SBOM's ability to plan, engage in executive behaviours and make on going decisions about their use of time. This study reveals that much of what is described here is a creation of SBOMs themselves.

5.3.3.2 External environmental influences

The most powerful external influence on the SBOMs time-management behaviours was their customers. For SBOMs, "Customers are king" (SBOM9:3). The impact that customers have on the ongoing success of a business and the pressure that is associated with their constant demands is well established (Chittithaworn et al., 2011). The authors found also, that successful businesses spent more time communicating with customers.

The interviews revealed the intensity of the pressure that customers exert as well as the SBOMs' perceived need to deliver:

I guess, when you're out servicing a client, it's controlled by the client, you make a commitment to the client, you gotta turn up on the day you gotta be there, you gotta do the work. Uh, so a lot of it is dictated by client needs or things to get done by deadlines for clients. So a lot of it is controlled by the marketplace. (SBOM1:1)

This comment was typical of the importance that SBOMs placed on satisfying the clients' needs and the pressures caused by meeting their deadlines. Deadline rush, discussed in Section 5.3.2.2, is primarily caused by a customer's requirement and a SBOMs perceived need to meet that requirement at a time that suits the customer. In some situations this may cause the SBOM to put other plans aside (procrastinate) in order to react to, for example, a changing customer requirement. It was the SBOMs' closeness to the customer that appears to have a most profound influence in terms of time allocation. The need to deal with a customer personally, to meet their individual needs and demands, is well documented as a characteristic of this relationship (Eriksson & Li, 2012; Pansiri & Temtime, 2010). This need for the SBOM's personal attention is highlighted in this comment:

I give them probably more time than I should but then they love, well, I perceive that they think they're special because they've got my time. (SBOM6:2)

This example also illustrates that SBOMs have a preference for this close relationship, and may enjoy the need to react to a customer's specific needs as well as a sense of being in demand. The closeness of SBOMs to their customers also causes the SBOMs to spend considerable amounts of time with selected customers for very little financial yield or goal achievement:

Yes, as in we have a certain number of customers that are just, they need help and they're not going to get it from anybody else, and I just do stuff for them.

It's those sorts of jobs that are almost straight out of the Community Chest type thing. (SBOM6:1)

In small business, customers may also be or become friends over time and there are expectations, obligations and other consequences when dealing with friends (Garzaniti et al., 2011), that may impact on the SBOM's time availability. SBOMs in this study were very accessible by customers which facilitated unplanned interruptions. In the example above, the particular SBOM went out of his way to make himself available to customers with which he had a long term commercial and/or friendly relationship. He did this because he enjoyed the interaction and he was also able to use his expertise but this did have time consequences such as having to stay after work to finish paperwork or other jobs that he had taken on.

Although industry pressures on SBOMs' time-management behaviours were discussed in the literature review, this study found no evidence to support the view that some industries exert more pressure than others. There were at least seven industry segments represented in this study, and the pressure, if any, came from the SBOMs themselves rather than the industry within which they operated. This appeared to be a factor of their personal preferences and style (Section 5.3.2.1), rather than any other factor. It was their decision to either expand the business or remain at the same size, and they determined the culture of their businesses, which influenced time-management behaviour.

External influences associated with Globalisation impact large and small businesses alike (Cordeiro, 2013). In the relatively small sample of SBOMs in this research, four of the participants regularly engaged with international customers. Their ability to meet such customer's expectations was, in part, due to their use of communication technologies. Also, the challenges associated with the time differences associated with dealing with international clients were made manageable by SBOMs being able to work from home.

This research also identified that the influence of technologies, and in particular communication technologies, was a widespread influence on the time-

management behaviours of SBOMs. Ninety percent of those interviewed used electronic diaries and calendars to schedule appointments with clients and to plan major events in which they had some level of involvement. While Cordeiro (2013) argued that the use of the wrong technologies could lead to managers wasting time, this was not evident in this study. On the whole the participating SBOMs used technology expeditiously as summed up by SBOM2:

Yes, the whole business lives off it. I can live off it outside of the business. When I'm not at work I can, um, access the server from home from anywhere in anywhere where I have broadband, wireless, mobile phone I can...pull off files work and work on them. (SBOM2:2)

It has become a usual and necessary part of SBOM work to be able to rely on communication technologies that enable the continuation of work away from their business premises. Every one of the 10 SBOMs used digital technologies each day as part of their work regimen. Mobile technologies, in particular, have made it easier for SBOMs to satisfy both work and family needs (Towers et al., 2006). It has also been shown that frequent users of mobile technologies have developed a range of 'personalised boundary management practices' (Cousins & Robey, 2015). In essence, this means that SBOMs integrate technologies into their work and life in such a way as to be more in control of their time. Using technology to work from home has ramifications for work-life balance, as it provides an option for an SBOM to reduce commuting time and attend to life matters simultaneously. Time is also more productive with the ability to share electronic resources such as calendars and email:

I suppose other time-management things like shared calendars, ability to access each other's email if we need to, I suppose event planning where, for example, on our shared calendar system when we get an event in we'll put an event in through that shared calendar, email it through to event managers and event coordinators. (SBOM7:3)

SBOMs found the cost benefits associated with the use of such technologies appealing:

We're actually quite conscious about keeping the costs down, so we're teleconferencing, we use that at the drop of a hat. I spend a lot more on communications than I spend on petrol. (SBOM5:2)

Communication technologies, in particular mobile phones, were used to make more productive use of commuting time:

So I have about an hour's commute each way so I use that time for phone calls quite often. (SBM9:1)

Customer-contact software is used for its efficiency and accuracy, and SBOMs believed it would be difficult to compete without it:

We use a customer relationship management software, so when enquiries first come in I have, I suppose, a standard schedule in how we manage those enquiries. So I look to firstly answer those enquiries within 24 hours. (SBOM7:1)

The need satisfy the opportunities and changing requirements that customers demand is the most dominant force that influences SBOMs' time-management behaviours. While globalisation as broadened the reach of customers, mobile technologies have enabled SBOMs to provide personalised and quality service at any time that suits their domestic and global customers. The challenge for SBOMs is to utilise the appropriate technologies in order to meet their customers' needs while maintaining a reasonable control of their work-life balance.

5.4 RESEARCH QUESTION THREE:

What are the productivity, work-life balance and stress-related consequences that result from the adoption of time-management behaviours by small-business owner-managers?

5.4.1 Consequences SBOMs' time-management behaviours

Consequences, which were defined as the positive and negative outcomes of time-management behaviour, are included in the discussion, as the anticipation of likely consequences also play a role in the motivation of SBOMs to adopt time-management behaviours. Three consequences associated with the adoption of time-management behaviours by SBOMs are considered below:

5.4.1.1 Productivity

Dimensions of time management, such as planning and monitoring, have been linked to improved productivity and personal performance (Adebisi, 2013; Arnold & Pulisch, 2004; Blackburn et al., 2013), though these links are far from conclusive. The description of the relationship between performance and productivity which describes productivity as "performance per unit time" (Moore & Tenney, 2012) proved to be a contextually appropriate definition for this discussion. One of the research participants defined productivity in terms of achievement within a time period which is one of the fundamental goals of time management. She stated:

...productivity really is not how many hours of work you worked, it's how many things you achieved within those hours. (SBM10:3)

The view that time management is associated with productivity is even more widespread, and arguably more influential within the populist self-help literature from which such claims originated (Lakein, 1973; MacKenzie, 1997; Pausch, 2008). This is not surprising given that claiming productivity is a direct consequence of time-management behaviour may certainly increase readership. However, these claims have not undergone the rigours of empirical research (Kearns & Gardiner, 2007), which is particularly noticeable in relation to small business and SBOMs around which this study is based.

Kearns and Gardiner's (2007) study, based around the experience of university staff and students, found some correlations between time-management behaviours and productivity. Their description of the work life of university staff and students, who experienced heavy workloads and long hours, shared some common ground with the hectic and time pressured working life of SBOMs as described in Chapter 1. Their research also suggested that when staff, in particular, had a strong sense of personal goal achievement, the adoption of time-management behaviour was perceived as beneficial. This notion of perceived benefit or value was evident in the SBOMs' time-management behaviours which were apparent in this study. SBOMs in this study engaged in time-management behaviours when they perceived a direct benefit, for example SBOM4 saw a direct correlation between planning and organising and his personal productivity:

My productivity levels of the day... where I turn up and respond to what gets thrown at me, are very low compared to the days where I am able to basically set out what I want to achieve and then try and achieve it, even if I rarely have a realistic or achievable handle on what I want to achieve. (SBM4:1)

This example, which was reflective of the majority of SBOMs in this study, links the more mechanical and practical aspects of time-management behaviours to perceived improvements in productivity. While it took several interviews to uncover these 'individualised' time-management behaviours, it was apparent that SBOMs adopted and integrated such behaviours with the sole purpose of improving their personal and organisational productivity. Examples found in this research such as: multi-tasking (polychronic behaviour); delegating key responsibilities; using travelling time to plan, organise or contact clients; and taking a secondary role in meetings that they would otherwise run, all suggest that SBOMs constantly work on improving their productivity by adopting time-management behaviours.

5.4.1.2 Work-life balance

Maintaining the "right" balance between the amount of time spent at work and "rest of life" activities, as described by Guest (2002), was a constant challenge for

the SBOMs who participated in this study. One of the consequences of time-management behaviour, can be a positive force in achieving a work-life balance (Brown et al., 2010; Green & Skinner, 2005). The link between time-management behaviours and work-life balance is highlighted in the comment below, which shows planning, monitoring and executive behaviours being used in the rearrangement of activity due to life-changing circumstances:

...since I have children, I tend to cut down my network a lot and I probably maybe network on line, like Linkedin, some of those Facebook, so you can just do networking at 7.00am and 6.00pm again. You know, you've got family commitments, so I cut down a lot of that. (SBOM10:1)

This quotation highlights the individualised nature of work-life balance in the context of small business and the compromises that are made, in this case to work at home, in order to achieve a workable balance.

This study confirms the “elusive” nature of the definition of work-life balance (Kalliath & Brough, 2008) and the many and varied definitions of the individual components of “work”, “life”, “balance” (Guest, 2002), and the combination of all three. In their thematic review of the literature, Kalliath and Brough (2008) identified six different conceptualisations of work-life balance. For example, the following SBOM's approach to work-life balance fits into a conceptualisation referred to by the authors as “equity across multiple roles”, where a person tries to disperse their time equally across different priority activities (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). He commented:

Now my great belief is family is always your number-one priority, your business and your professional life is your number-two priority and then probably community and volunteering is your number-three priority. How you fit those in is then dependent on those priorities, and that's the way I look it. (SBOM8:1)

Having a strong commitment to specific time-consuming activities outside of work may lead to SBOMs making decisions about how they spend their work day, hence

a possible link to time management. SBOM8, for instance, appeared to be particularly well organised and was constantly looking for opportunities to delegate parts of his workload to concentrate on what he considered to be bigger-picture issues. He actively set boundaries to control the amount of time he spent at work (Locke & Latham, 2006). Because he was significantly involved in family life and the community, he tried to give each as much time as possible. He made these obligations fixed, and that caused him to be constantly on the lookout for opportunities to reduce his time load at work. SBOM8 integrated the four dimensions of time-management behaviour (Claessens et al., 2009) into his approach to work and life. In this case, one could conclude that time-management behaviours enabled SBOM8 to be involved in life activities and outside work priorities influenced him to adopt time-management behaviours.

Conversely, when the balance was out of kilter, as represented in the experience of SBOM9, there is “role conflict between their work and life domains” (Williamson et al., 2011). There were consequences, of what he perceived as an imbalance, on both his personal life and business:

And it's just having an impact on how we run the business. It's having an impact at home. It's an impact on you're tired, all those kinds of things, so we are being forced to do that. In a way that's a little sad because I can see as I go through this that really it didn't need that catalyst. (SBOM9:3)

The experience of SBOM9 fits into Kalliath and Brough's (2008) conceptualisation as both the “satisfaction between multiple roles” and the “fulfilment of role salience between multiple roles”.

Also, evident in this study, was the blurring of boundaries between work and non-work activities which added another challenge in determining how small-business managers experience work-life balance (Williamson et al., 2011). SBOM2, for instance recalled that he sometimes ‘zoned out’ at home as work issues re-emerged and blended into his home life. The blurring is even more apparent for home-based business managers (Walker et al., 2008). SBOM5, who worked at

home, due to his family circumstances, spent most of his days balancing computer based work with looking after his severely disabled son. All of the SBOMs who partook in this study worked from home in varying degrees at various times. The adoption of time-management behaviours by SBOMs may be best interpreted as enabling them to more effectively use their time at work in pursuit of their goals. Whether or not it influences their work-life balance positively is largely up to them.

5.4.1.3 Stress reduction

Time management is presented in both the popular press and academic research for its positive relationship to stress reduction (Allen, 2003; Macan et al., 1990; Nordqvist et al., 2004; Woodhull, 1997). Stress may also have a reciprocal influence with time management, insofar as the latter may be either a cause or an effect of the former. Personal influences affecting time-management behaviour, such as procrastination, referred to in Section 5.3.2.1, have also been shown to contribute to stress. An imbalance between work and life priorities has also been linked to stress and other negative outcomes (Brown et al., 2010). The busyness and sheer pace of work and long working hours associated with small business which for improving productivity and performance may also contribute to stress (Bittman et al., 2009). The volume of work and deadline rush (Section 5.3.2.2), appeared to be one of the most stressful aspects of the SBOM3's work:

There is a stress factor sometimes. It really depends on the volume of work. It's the volume of work all the time. We get a missed deadline if we've got so much work we just can't do it quick enough. (SBM3:3)

However, participants in this study, for the main part, believed they were able to control their levels of stress:

I don't get stressed. I don't fly off the handle at something. I might say I'm frustrated with certain circumstances but that really doesn't change my approach. (SBOM2:1)

Added to this was the belief that managing a small business was a stressful environment with which one just had to learn to cope:

Busy but manageable, and to me, I don't see it as a big stress. I think that running a business, you also need to learn how to manage your stress. And I tend to do that. (SBOM10:1)

Disruption in the form of interruptions are common in work situations where employees and customers demand immediate responses. Being able to control disruption is positively associated with dealing with stress (Kearns & Gardiner, 2007). The impact of disruptions on time-management behaviours of SBOM such as planning was apparent amongst the research participants:

In a situation as I am in, in which I'm prone to so much disruption in my own planning of time - planning those goals for a day or even for a particular week, and so on - in some cases is just a case of setting myself with pressure points which in most cases are not necessary. (SBOM5:1)

These disruptions also contributed to stress:

I don't stay on track as well as I would like to. That's putting it bluntly and that's when the stress comes out. (SBOM5:2)

Both of these comments from SBOM5 indicate that, in his particular and quite turbulent work environment, unrealistic deadlines that he set as part of his time management actually precipitated stress. As he noted, "in most cases, they are not necessary". Green and Skinner (2005) showed in their study that planning and prioritising can reduce stress. However, their results were based on the responses of university students, who it could be argued, are under a different range of stresses than SBOMs.

In this study, participants acknowledged the negative impact of procrastination which Knaus (2000) suggested may be both the result of and a contributor to stress. The impact of stress on time management is highlighted in the comment below:

I think [procrastination's] my biggest time-waster. I definitely have a very steady problem with procrastination, to a large extent driven by tiredness and depression. (SBM5:3)

This is in contrast to another participant who has very strong views on procrastination. Out of all of the SBOMs, he appeared to be the most organised and was stringent about procrastination:

No. I hate procrastination, even if - I would rather somebody make the wrong decision rather than no decision, because at least if you've got the wrong decision you've got momentum to change direction. If you're sitting there procrastinating, you have no momentum, you can't do crap. (SBM8:3)

SBM8 also referred to his own approach to procrastination as “considered procrastination”, which was related to his decision-making. This considered procrastination was a time-management decision: deferring action to a later time, he could make a more informed decision. This strategy reduced the stress of the sheer volume of work that sometimes confronted him.

For the most part, SBOMs who participated in this study appeared to either be in control of their stress or had learnt to work with the inevitable stresses that occur. This study supports the view that people, in this case SBOMs, who adopted time-management behaviours displayed lower levels of stress (Kearns & Gardiner, 2007). The time-management behaviours that they adopted were, however, individualised to suit their particular work situations and flexible enough to allow for the interruptions and changes in priority that reflect the reactive world of small business.

5.4.2 Summary of the influences on SBOMs' time-management behaviours

First, personal influences of SBOMs proved to be the strongest influential force on their time-management behaviours. In particular, those SBOMs who linked their personal and business goals with their workplace actions used a range of time-management behaviours. SBOMs who demonstrated a strong sense of purpose

and maintained a healthy work-life balance used time management effectively to help them achieve their goals.

Second, the research showed that both internal and external environmental factors had an influence. SBOMs' preoccupation with keeping the business afloat and/or expanding the business, significantly affected their priorities as well as their attitude towards planning. "Customers are king", as one of the SBOM participants commented, and customers exerted the most external pressure on SBOMs time-management behaviours. Time management was frequently replaced by deadline rush, when a change in customer requirements suddenly emerged or a customer deadline was due. Also, the capability and effectiveness of SBOM's supporting work teams affected their ability to delegate, complete work on time and create customer satisfaction.

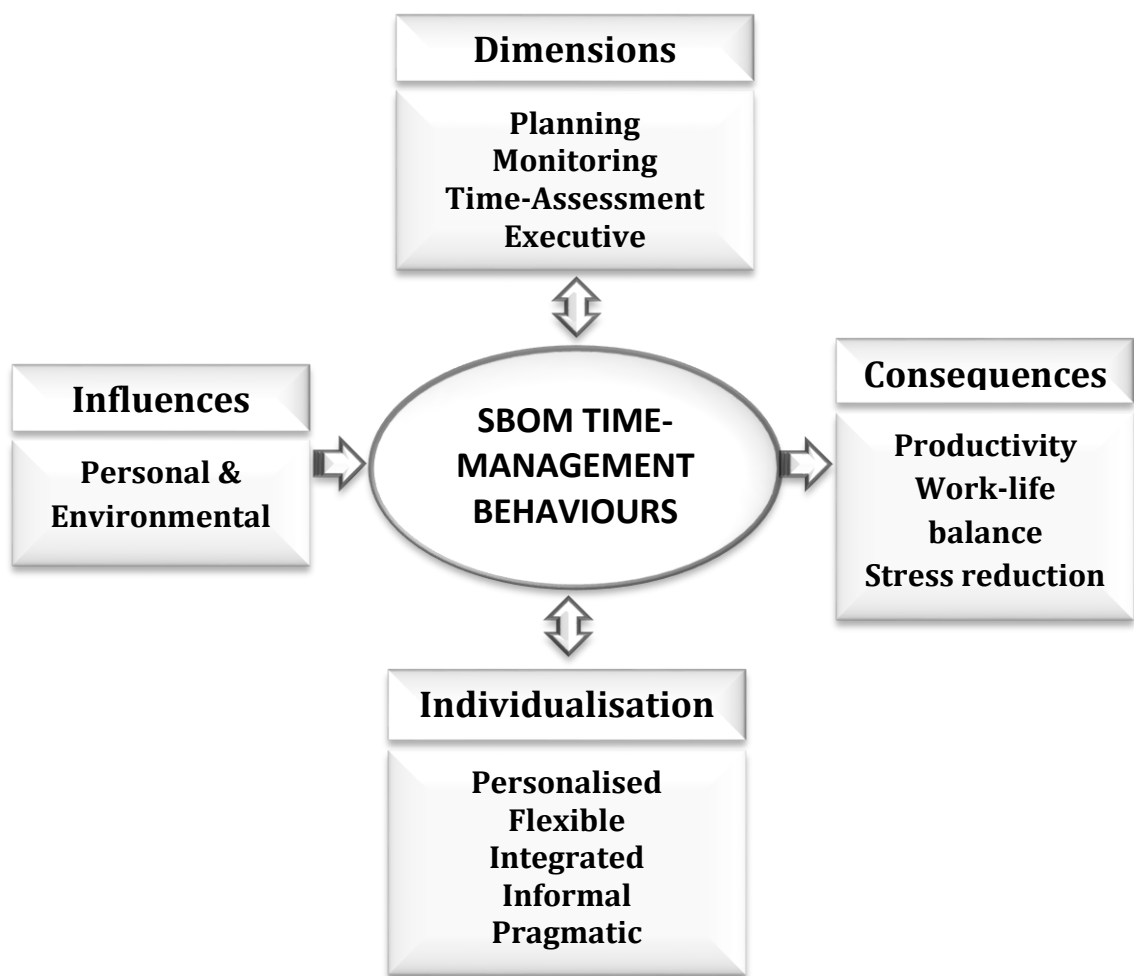
Third, consequences both emanated from and contributed to SBOMs' time-management behaviours. Productivity and personal performance acted as an enabler for time-management behaviour particularly in respect to the perceived control over time and the creation of discretionary time. A strong desire for the right balance between work and time outside work affected SBOMs' desire for planning, prioritising and organising, as well as the degree to which they took "executive" actions to ensure that their time was not wasted. This may have also contributed to a less stressful work environment. Those SBOMs who had a strong sense of purpose and established clear goals used their discretionary time to work on the business or pursue their own interests.

5.4.3 A synthesis of time-management behaviours, influences and consequences

SBOMs' time-management behaviours are affected by both personal and environmental influences. The result is a unique individualised approach to time management that takes into account the personality, needs and goals of the SBOM as well as the opportunities and boundaries that the environment presents.

The consequences of adopting time-management behaviours provide tangible benefits including, productivity, work-life balance and stress reduction as well as motivating SBOMs to engage in such behaviours. Figure 5.4 illustrates the relationship between influences and consequences caused by SBOMs' adoption of time-management behaviours.

Figure 5.4: The influences on and the consequences of SBOMs' adoption of time-management behaviours



The individualisation of time-management behaviours illustrated in Figure 5.4 means that different influences may have varying levels of importance for different SBOMs, the time management behaviours they adopt may differ accordingly and the consequences also.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study acknowledges the important contribution that small businesses play in the on-going success of world economies. It also highlights the significant role that SBOMs play in meeting the many challenges that face small businesses, and asserts that preeminent amongst those challenges is time management (see Chapter 1).

This study set out to explore SBOMs' time-management behaviours. It sought to answer three principal questions:

1. What are the planning, monitoring, executive and time-assessment behaviours of small-business owner-managers in Australia?
2. How do personal and environmental factors influence the time-management behaviours of small-business owner-managers?
3. What are the productivity, work-life balance and stress-related consequences that result from the adoption of time-management behaviours by small-business owner-managers?

In relation to these three questions, five findings emerged from this study. First, SBOMs engage in a range of time-management behaviours that principally revolve around planning and monitoring; these are supported by time-assessment and executive behaviours. Second, time management, as practised by SBOMs, is individualised to accommodate the uniqueness of their situation and the aspirations they have for the success of their business.

Third, the influences that affect SBOMs' time-management behaviours are powerful and help form the way individual SBOMs choose to use and adapt such behaviours. Two categories of influence were identified from the in-depth, qualitative interviews: personal and environmental influences. Fourth, examining the consequences that result from time-management behaviours provides a more complete picture about the benefits to and motivations of SBOMs who adopt such behaviours. Finally, the combination of the ways in which SBOMs individualise

time-management behaviour; the influences that affect time-management behaviour; and the consequences of time-management behaviour, help to build a contextual framework that contributes to the research in both the disciplines of time management and small-business management.

This chapter outlines the theoretical contributions of this study and the implications for the practice of time management by SBOMs. It then discusses the limitations of the study and future research opportunities and gives a brief conclusion that ties the key themes together.

6.2 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION

6.2.1 Theoretical contribution 1: Confirmation and expansion of the Claessens et al. (2009) four dimensions model of time management

This study used a four-dimensional framework derived from the literature to classify time-management behaviours: 1) assessment behaviours, 2) planning behaviours, 3) monitoring behaviours and 4) executive behaviours (Claessens et al., 2009). The use of these four dimensions provided this exploratory study with a broad frame of reference within which to explore SBOMs' time-management behaviours.

This study contributes to and expands on the understanding of these four dimensions. Time-assessment behaviour, which involves awareness of the time it takes to complete tasks based on past experiences, is presented as a prerequisite and co-requisite for the other three dimensions (Claessens et al., 2009). This study found that experienced SBOMs, such as those who partook in this study, used time-assessment behaviour intuitively. Time assessment, in some instances, appeared to become redundant when a more pressing opportunity, demand or "deadline rush" pushed all other activities aside and caused SBOMs to spend as long as they deemed necessary to complete a task or satisfy a customer requirement.

Planning behaviour, which includes goal-setting, prioritising and scheduling activities such as to-do lists, was practised to varying degrees by all of the SBOM research participants. This study supported the view that SBOMs perceive

planning as a critical pathway towards business growth (de Lema & Duréndez, 2007). It also supports the view that small-business managers find it challenging to put aside the time to engage in formal planning activity (Ates et al., 2013). The various components of planning behaviour were, by far, the most prevalent of the SBOMs' time-management behaviours and remain at the centre of their time-management strategies.

Monitoring behaviour, though designed to "monitor" or keep track of the progress of a manager's planned activity, was frequently influenced by situations, reactions or new opportunities that arose. SBOMs often gauged the effectiveness of their time-management behaviours by monitoring their progress against the anticipated time duration of planned work. However, this study determined that monitoring was often undertaken after a planned event, in hindsight, and it was usually in regard to projects taking more time than anticipated, not less. The regret that SBOMs appeared to experience, as a result of not achieving a target on time, was balanced by the value that they perceived from taking advantage of an otherwise unplanned opportunity.

The fourth dimension of time-management behaviour, as set out by Claessens et al. (2009), is referred to as executive behaviour. While Claessens et al. (2009, p. 30) defined such behaviour as "activities that influence ongoing behaviours" and listed the avoiding workplace interruptions and running better meetings as some of those executive behaviours, the current study expanded this definition to include delegation which most of the SBOM participants used, although sometimes reluctantly.

6.2.2 Theoretical contribution 2: The individualisation of time-management behaviour

While this study showed that the four dimensions of time-management behaviour (Claessens et al., 2009) provided a useful framework with which to study time-management behaviour, it also helped to identify SBOMs' unique approaches to time management. This individualisation, as it is referred to in Section 5.2.5, is a

thematic representation of the SBOMs' distinctive approaches to time management which collectively emanated from the in-depth qualitative interviews.

This individualisation was characterised by personalisation, integration, flexibility, informality and pragmatism. SBOMs' time-management behaviours, in the context of a small business, have been shown to: to reflect the personality of the individual; be integrated into their every-day management practice to the point that time management is indistinguishable from other management practices; be flexible enough to accommodate rapid environmental changes, opportunities and demands; be informal and 'on the run' rather than purposeful and planned; and, be based on pragmatism rather than a perceived need to follow a set of time-management rules. While Macan et al. (1990) used the term 'Mechanics' to describe the range of time-management behaviours, reflecting much of the time-management literature, and Claessens et al. (2009) integrated this into their broader review of time-management behaviour, this study contributes to the understanding of the way in which SBOMs individualise time-management behaviour to suit their own approaches to management as well as the context as discussed in 6.2.3. This individualisation implies that the consequences of adopting individual time management behaviours may vary from individual to another, i.e. there is no generic causal link between individual influences and the behaviours adopted, nor can the consequences for a particular individual of adopting such behaviours be predicted on the basis of the findings of this study.

6.2.3 Theoretical contribution 3: Influences affecting time-management behaviour

The third theoretical contribution comprises two types of influences that affect time-management behaviour. Research has acknowledged the relationship between personal traits and time-management behaviours (Francis-Smythe & Robertson, 1999; Mudrack, 2007; Zhang, Goonetilleke, Plocher, & Max Liang, 2005). In particular, this research has highlighted some of the key personal characteristics and preferences that influence SBOMs' time-management behaviours including their personality traits and individual differences; their

inclinations towards procrastination, deadline rush and time discounting; and, their personal preference for monochronic or polychronic in the way they approach their tasks. Though this study is far from conclusive, it suggests strongly that personal influences on time-management behaviour contribute to the way that such behaviours help individualise their time-management practices.

Environmental factors - surrounding and context - have also been shown to affect SBOMs' time-management behaviours (Burt et al., 2009). Internal organisational influences such as: SBOMs' unceasing focus on survival and growth; the stage of the business life cycle; and the capability of the staff to share responsibilities and show initiative, impact on SBOMs' overall focus and their perception of how much they should do themselves or how much they should delegate. External influences, particularly SBOMs' relationships with customers affects their ability to manage time effectively. This is a product of the perceived need of some SBOMs to deal directly with customers with whom they have developed personal relationships (Eriksson & Li, 2012; Pansiri & Temtime, 2010). Using technology to its advantage has also enabled SBOMs to operate effectively away from the office. The personal and environmental influences affect SBOMs' whole approach towards time management and also affect the individualisation which was discussed in Section 6.2.2.

6.2.4 Theoretical contribution 4: Consequences of time-management behaviour

The fourth theoretical contribution is in relation to the consequences of SBOMs' adoption of time-management behaviours. Section 6.2.2 highlights that pragmatism is a key ingredient in SBOMs' individualisation of time-management behaviours. This study has shown that SBOMs adopt time-management behaviours selectively and pragmatically to suit the situation which they have either created or within which they find themselves, and the outcomes they seek. Productivity, which has been positively associated with time-management behaviour (Smith & Zagelmeyer, 2010), in this study was found to be both an outcome and a motivator for SBOMs' adoption of time-management behaviours. Where SBOMs recognise

and realise the productive benefits of time management, they integrate such practices into their management portfolio.

Work-life balance is a consequence of SBOMs' time-management behaviours that was shown to be particularly important to this group of experienced SBOMs. In most instances, work-life balance was perceived as a reward for the efficiencies and productivity benefits which time-management behaviours, such as planning and executive behaviours, brought about. Stress reduction is the third consequence of SBOMs' time-management behaviours which was examined in this study. There was some correlation between the more organised of the SBOMs who partook in this study and lower stress levels but this was far from conclusive. Overall, stress levels were kept under control by a range of factors and time-management behaviour was amongst them.

6.2.5 Theoretical contribution 5: Context

This study also contributes to small-business management research by focusing on the specific time-management challenges that face small-business managers in the context of their workplace. However, the time-management literature has largely avoided small-business managers as their target group, instead focusing on populations associated with larger organisational structures such as health (Covic et al., 2003; Ebrahimi et al., 2014; Kleshinski, 2005) and educational environments (Macan et al., 1990; Misra & McKean, 2000; Sharif & Ismail, 2010).

Although these studies have provided a breadth of contributions to time-management research in the context of more-complex organisational settings, this study has focused on the more unpredictable and volatile environments that surround the management and ownership of small business. This study has identified that SBOMs' individualisation of time-management behaviours, the influences that affect these behaviours and the consequences that result from their adoption, may cause researchers to rethink the practice of time management in a variety of different contexts.

6.3 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Emerging from this study are a number of practical implications that may have an impact on small-business managers, management advisors, management trainers and those contemplating a venture into small business.

6.3.1 Implications for SBOMs

The results of this study show that SBOMs who have survived, or even thrived, in business for more than 10 years have developed an individualised approach to time management based on a nexus of competing goals, demands and situational variables. This study showed that time management, as described in Section 6.2.2, may appear somewhat dishevelled and disorganised, yet may still be effective in terms of productivity, work-life balance and stress reduction.

6.3.2 Implications for time-management training

This study, with its contextual approach to the time-management behaviour of SBOMs, has implications for time-management training. In Australia, time-management training is popular, abundant and readily accessible. It is presented in a variety of training mediums including short workshops and longer management-training programs which are presented face-to-face, online as self-paced programs or mixtures of both. The popularity of such training programs, particularly in the business, health and education sectors, is associated with the underlying assumption that undertaking a time-management training course will improve an individual's productivity. Research into the effectiveness of aspects of time-management training remains inconclusive (Kearns & Gardiner, 2007; Macan, 1996; Van Eerde, 2003), yet the training providers' claims remain very optimistic. This claim made by Australian Institute of Management is only one example:

You will develop the skills to analyse workloads, prioritise tasks, overcome procrastination and create time-management systems to increase productivity and effectiveness. (AIM, 2016)

This study challenges the value of commercial training programs in being able to address many of the complex time-management issues and influences that small-business managers must deal with. Such issues include the constant unpredictability of workload, the reactive nature of dealing with customer demands and constantly changing priorities. The irony is that small-business managers, who arguably could benefit most from time-management training programs, may have neither the time nor the inclination to indulge in development activities that, in themselves, use up valuable time and are a diversion from their core business. This research may provide valuable insights for the development of more context-specific and customised training programs that help SBOMs by directly addressing their individual time-management challenges and needs.

6.3.3 Implications for small-business advisors

This study may also improve the value that small-business advisors provide in dealing with SBOMs. In Australia, a raft of advisory bodies focus specifically on the needs of small business; they range from government organisations such as the Australian Government Small Business Advisory Service and the Australian Bureau of Statistics to individual consultants who provide advice to and mentor small businesses.

For example, this study has shown that customers' influence on small businesses significantly affects the SBOMs' time-management behaviours. Having to react to customer enquiries, opportunities and sometimes demands compromises an SBOM's ability to effectively plan and monitor workplace activity. This also has a flow-on effect in respect to other organised plans. Having a better understanding of the need to individualise time management in a small-business environment may provide trainers, coaches, mentors and advisors with more-realistic expectations and better tailor-made solutions to assist small-business managers.

6.3.4 Implications for new entrants into small business

This study focused on experienced small-business managers who had been successful in small business for at least 10 years. How these managers integrated

time management into their everyday work was a result of experience, trial and error and a commitment to results. This study has identified a range of influences that affect the time-management behaviours of experienced SBOMs; however the experiences and decisions of new entrants in terms of time-management behaviour are largely unknown.

Thus, this study may benefit those contemplating an entry into small business by providing a realistic, research-based picture of the forces that compete for and shape the time usage and behaviours of small-business managers. It may be used in association with business planning so that decisions about the reality of deadlines and milestones are more informed. It may also provide insights into ways effective small-business managers deal with delegation, stress and work-life balance.

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

The research was limited by the relatively small sample size of SBOMs who participated in the study. The selection of SBOMs was influenced, to a certain extent, by a need for “convenience” rather than any possibility of random sampling. This limitation, commonly associated with qualitative studies (Creswell, 2013, pp. 101-102), was caused by the logistical and time-related challenges associated with interviewing small-business managers. These managers, as discussed in Chapter 1, struggle with spending time on non-core business activity such as involvement in interviews.

The industries represented in this study included information technology, process-improvement consulting, bicycle retail, graphic art, leadership consulting and steel fabrication. These industries are only a small representation of the nearly one million small businesses operating in Australia. Future time-management studies would benefit from the analysis of a much broader range of businesses so that meaningful comparisons could be made. Also, nine men and one woman were interviewed, and this is by no means a fair representation of the distribution of women and men in small business. The emphasis of this qualitative study was on

depth rather than quantity of respondents, and thus it used interviews as the primary data-gathering process.

The data collected in time logs, which were completed by the research participants, was self-reported. It was not possible to observe the SBOMs to check the veracity of their completed time logs. The accuracy of their accounts of their own time use could be influenced by the fact that these documents were submitted to the researcher for examination and discussion (Orpen, 1994). Not all the participants had completed the time logs by the second round of interviews and this caused some problems, as the questions for the second round were, based in part on the time logs.

The study intended to use observation as one of the key data-gathering methods, but circumstances prevented this due to the reluctance of SBOMs to have other members of their businesses be involved in the study. The flow-on effect of this was the reliance on both the interviews and the time logs' data.

While recognising such limitations, this study explored new ground in the appreciation and practical application of time management in the context of small business. Accordingly, the study has been amongst the first to explore the affect that personal and environmental influences have on SBOMs time-management behaviours as well as examining the consequences that result from the adoption of such behaviours.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has confirmed both the importance of time management in the work of small-business managers and the influence that context has SBOMs' time-management behaviours. There are four main recommendations for future research emanating from this study: 1) the ongoing need to study time management in context; 2) the impact of personal differences on time-management behaviours; 3) the further study of the distinctions between the time-management behaviours of entrepreneurs and managers; and 4) the measurement of the effectiveness of time management in context.

6.5.1 Time management in context

Time-management research has been strongly influenced by popular literature, which tends to focus on the more mechanical and disciplinary aspects associated with planning. Macan (1994), for example, used the popular literature to develop the Time-management Behaviour Scale. While research has benefitted from broad interest in the benefits of time management, it could be further enhanced by studying the applicability of time-management theory to a variety of working contexts such as the small business, which this study examines.

Future research could also compare time management in different contexts, e.g. small and medium businesses, or medium business and public-sector organisations of the same size. In turn, this may cause time-management advocates and researchers to consider a range of different approaches, which may contribute to the development of more relevant time-management methodologies and measures.

6.5.2 The impact of personal differences

This study concurs with the view that a manager's personal influence over the success of a business is critical (Brown et al., 2010). Studies have also emphasised the role that personality plays in time-management behaviours; for example Francis-Smythe et al. (1999) study which considered "time personality" as a factor that influences business outcomes, and Zhang et al. (2005) who linked individual attributes such as polychronicity and monochronicity to the personality of the manager. The findings of this study suggest personality exerts a strong influence on SBOMs' time-management behaviours. Further work on the personality inventories such as Myers Briggs Type Indicator or the Big Five, particularly in the context of small business, may shed valuable insights into the capacity and the likelihood of SBOMs to adopt and integrate time-management behaviours.

6.5.3 Entrepreneurs versus managers

This study did not specifically look at small-business entrepreneurs in regard to time-management behaviours. Evidence from this research points toward a

connection between SBOM entrepreneurial behaviour and time-management behaviour. Three of the SBOMs interviewed showed strong signs of entrepreneurship, based on the view that entrepreneurs are characteristically risk-takers who look out for new opportunities and gather the resources to improve the provision of goods and services offered to customers (Yildirim & Saygin, 2011). Their time-management behaviours were much more pronounced than those of the other participants in the study. This was particularly noticeable in terms of their project-management planning, their ability to delegate and their continual struggles with work-life balance. However, as noted under limitations, with such small numbers of participants, the findings cannot be generalised. Further research could focus on the time-management behaviours of entrepreneurs compared to business managers.

6.5.4 The need for better measurement of time management in context

The final recommendation for future research is in regard to the measurement of time management within different contexts. Numerous instruments have been developed and used to measure factors and outcomes associated with time management, such as time-management behaviour (Macan, 1994) and the degree to which individuals perceive their use of time as structured and purposive using the Time Structure Questionnaire (Bond & Feather, 1988). More recently, research has begun to focus on areas to which this study refers as “influences on time management”, using instruments such as the Time-Management Environment Scale (Burt et al., 2009). While existing research and development has focused on specific elements of time management, the more in-depth and holistic view that this study has taken, suggests the need for the development of a more inclusive view of time-management measurement, which includes a range of behaviours, influences and consequences.

6.6 FINAL COMMENTS

Time or, the lack of it, is a constant challenge for SBOMs who juggle the responsibilities associated with running and expanding their businesses. SBOMs are, more often than not, the founders, the income generators and the inspiration

behind their small businesses. Successful small-business managers, who work in a broad range of environments, face ever-increasing demands on their time; these demands may be attributed to the fast pace of contemporary business, which requires immediate results. SBOMs' ability to manage their time effectively to achieve their personal and business goals is a uniting quality of this disparate group.

Paradoxically, SBOMs, who may benefit from the incorporation of time-management behaviour into their everyday work regimen, are difficult and sometimes reluctant subjects to assess; this may explain the lack of research that directly observes their time-management behaviour. Much of the research into time management has depended on feedback from populations of students who, though convenient for the researchers, have not provided the kind of small-business contextualised experience necessary to understand how SBOMs engage in time management.

Planning and monitoring, in their many forms, were the most prevalent of the time-management behaviours that SBOMs demonstrated; yet these behaviours were constantly hindered by the shortage of time that many SBOMs experienced. The individualised time-management behaviours of SBOMs that emerged in this study were characterised by personalisation, flexibility, integration, informality and pragmatism. The influences that affect SBOMs' time-management behaviours include personal and environmental influences, which together, shape the capacity of SBOMs to manage their time. The consequences of adopting time-management behaviours provide tangible benefits including, productivity, work-life balance and stress reduction as well as motivating SBOMs to engage in such behaviours.

Finally, this thesis has contributed to both the theory and practice of time management in the context of small business and has also provided suggestions for further research into understanding how time management fits into the small-business environment. The demands on the time of SBOMs, who lead and manage their small businesses, show no signs of slowing down. This research may provide the basis for helping SBOMs deal with present and future time-management

challenges within work environments which are fast paced, uncertain and reactive. It is hoped that the chaos, lack of structure and unpredictability, associated with small-business management, will be replaced by organisation, better structures and more predictability through the adoption of time-management behaviours that are suited to the individual needs of the SBOM and the context within which they operate.

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APPENDIX 1: CONSENT FORM FOR SBOM PARTICIPANTS



University of Wollongong

Exploration of factors that influence the time-management behaviours of small to medium enterprise (SME) managers

Peter Michael McNamara

I have been given information about the project titled: Exploration of factors that influence the time-management behaviours of small to medium enterprise (SME) managers and discussed the research project with Peter McNamara who is conducting this research as part of a Doctor of Business Administration supervised by Dr Grace McCarthy in the Sydney Business School at the University of Wollongong.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research, which include the use of my time and my reflections on my time-management behaviours and have had an opportunity to ask Peter McNamara any questions I may have about the research and my participation.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. My refusal to participate or withdrawal of consent will not affect my

treatment in any way or my relationship with the Sydney Business School or my relationship with the University of Wollongong.

If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact Peter McNamara on 42213571 or pmm850@uowmail.edu.au or mobile 0411341436 and Dr Grace McCarthy on 4221 4880 or if I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Research, University of Wollongong on 4221 4457.

By signing below I am indicating my consent to

- Being involved in three interviews with Peter McNamara with an approximate duration of one hour each
- Having the interviews recorded (digital voice recording)
- Completing a time log for a certain period

I understand that anonymous data collected from my participation will be used for a Research Thesis and journal or conference publication, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

Signed

Date

.....

...../...../.....

Name (please print)

.....

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW 1

Your role as owner/manager of a small business

- Describe the main parts (chunks) of work that you are involved in as owner-manager of this business?
- What percentage of time do these activities take up?
- What other work-related activities are you personally involved in?
- How much time do you spend in work-related activity during an average week?
- Describe your workload? (easy-going to overbearing, busy – rushed)
- What is the pressure or stress level like in your business?
- How much of your work is reactive or proactive? What percentage would be either?

Time-management behaviours

- What is your understanding of time management and what do you think are its benefits?
- Is the management of time a big issue in this business and does it have a place?
- What activities or actions would you take that would represent time-management behaviours? (Follow up with questions surrounding time management behaviours)
- How do you go about time management in this business?

- Is there a time-management culture in this business?
- Have you ever undertaken training in time-management techniques and have you used any of these techniques? (How effective was this?)

Planning and organising your work

- Is planning a major or essential part of your work? If so, tell me about:
- How do you go about short-term (day-to-day) planning?
- How do you go about long-term planning?
- How do you measure the success of your planning?
- Do you have the opportunity to delegate much of your work? Is this done while you are working or in the planning stage?
- How do you determine how long tasks take?

In control of your time

- Do you feel in control of your time at work?
- How much of your time is in your own control or is controlled by others?
- Who are those others and in what ways do they control or influence your time?

Do you think you could manage your time differently?

- In what ways could your time-management behaviours differently?
- What would be the result of managing your time better?
- What would be the benefits of managing your time better?

INTERVIEW 2

Part One:

The purpose of the second interview is as a follow-on to the first interview (the introduction and perception stage). This is the confirmation stage. The objective of this interview is to:

- Reflect on your thoughts of time management since the last interview
- Feedback
- Work through the completed time log and generate discussion
- Focus on the influences that affect your time-management behaviours

Part two:

Discussion of emerging themes from the last interview:

- A list of themes that emerged from the first interview were discussed with the SBOM
- Feedback was also encouraged

Part 3: Interview questions

- Have you had any other thoughts about your use of time and time management since we last met?
- Have you managed to balance your work-life and home-life demands well in the past weeks?
- Tell me about the experience of completing the time log? How, when, where?

- Did the experience provide you with any thoughts about your time-management behaviours?
- Let's work through some of the activities that you undertook with a view of understanding the influences or driving forces that caused you to allocate that time to those activities....
- How much does your personality influence the way you manage your time? How would you describe your personality?
- Are your time-management behaviours influenced by your particular work environment? The people you work with? The structures and processes that are a part of this business?
- Does technology influence your time-management behaviours?
- Does the nature of the IT industry influence your time management?
- What other factors influence the way you manage your time?
- Is procrastination something that you identify with?

INTERVIEW 3

Part One:

The purpose of the third interview is to bring it all together and consolidate your thinking about time management and how you practise it in your business. This is the confirmation stage. Note that the questions incorporate responses made in previous interviews. The objective of this interview is to:

- Given that the traditional view of time management is very much about planning and time logging, could you describe further what time management looks like from your perspective? Let me add to this...you also mentioned that it is important to have “basic time-management skills”, but you have to go way beyond these to achieve your goals.
- Describe some of your time-management behaviours (i.e., anything that you do that leads to efficient use of your time – think more broadly than just time logs).... I want to get a picture of a manager’s view of how this thing works.
- Describe some of the weaknesses in your approach to time management? In this response think about what does not work for you or where you are continually frustrated.
- What do you think influences your time-management behaviours at work most? Internally, is it staff, management, technical issues and externally is it customers, technology, the industry you work in?
- What are the bigger driving forces in your life which impact on how you set your priorities (or time manage) at work? How

much do your personal goals influence your time-management behaviours?

- Describe the values and attitudes that influence the way you work. Reflect on the values/attitudes that influence your time-management behaviours.
- Think about your personality as an SME manager. Describe some of the characteristics of your personality that influence the way you manage your time...Is there a link, please explore.
- How much has your approach to time management influenced the success of your business?
- If you were to explain to a colleague or an employee how you go about effectively managing your time to achieve your goals, how would you describe it to them?
- In summary, if we conducted a time-management SWOT, what would you put in each box about your time-management behaviours?
- Other questions were asked to each of the participants depending on any outstanding issues.

APPENDIX 3: TIME LOG SAMPLES

Time Log – SME Time Management Behaviour Research conducted by Peter McNamara UoW

Please complete this time log for all activities that you undertake while you are at work in @ 15-30 minute intervals. Please include telephone calls or any other work related activity whilst travelling to and from work. You are requested to complete this time log for at least three full days between now and the next interview. Please provide the researcher with a copy of this time log before the next interview.

Time Log of

Sample One

Date: / /

| Time | Activity | Duration | Notes |
|-------|----------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| 8am | Go to REPO, BUY DEGREASER/BLADES | 15 | Wash up. |
| 8.25 | OPEN UP, PUT OUT, TAKE | 55 | CLEAN W/S BEFORE |
| | INFO SERVICE, PHONE 2/CLEAN | | DOORS OPEN. |
| 9.20 | SERVE-TALK TO, CUST | 20 | |
| 9.40 | PHONE, START REPAIR. | 20 | |
| 10 | PHONE-REPAIR-PHONE-SERVE | 60 | |
| 11 | DISCUSS COMPUTER SYSTEM | 15 | |
| 11.15 | STAFF ISSUE | 15 | |
| 11.30 | TALK, PHONE, PHONE, REPAIR | 30 | |
| 12 | WALK IN REPAIR, PHONE | 30 | |
| 12.30 | POLICY DISCUSSION WITH RAN. RB. | | |
| | THE INTERNET & PRICING | 30 | |
| 1 | PHONE, GET BIKES FROM STORAGE | | |
| | TO READY FOR ASSEMBLY. | 15 | |
| 1.15 | UNLOAD 16 BIKES DELIVERED + | 60 | |
| | PLACE IN STORE | | |
| 2.15 | SELL BIKES - GET READY-COLLECT | 60 | COMPLETE SALE. |
| 3.15 | DO QUOTE - CUSTOMER REQ. | 30 | |
| 3.45 | READ EMAILS. | 15 | DELETE MOST. |
| 4 | POST SCHOOL, PHONE, GLUE TYPES | | |
| | SERVE, PHONE, PHONE. | 60 | |
| | DISCUSS DONATION/FUNDRAISER | | |
| 5 | ORGANISE DISCUSS NEEDS FOR | | |
| | SAT TRADE MEET BUILDER | | |

Time Log - Page 1

Time Log – SME Time Management Behaviour Research conducted by Peter McNamara UoW

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Time Log of

Sample Two

Date: 1 / 1 / 2011

| Time | Activity | Duration | Notes |
|-------------|---|----------|-------|
| 7.00-8.30 | Completion of presentation for IPAC | 1.5h | |
| 8.30-9.00 | General admin / emails | .5h | |
| 9.00-9.30 | Interview with candidate | .5h | |
| 9.30-11.00 | General admin & financials | 1.5h | |
| 11.00-12.15 | Meeting with 3 reps from IPAC @ DML | 1.15h | |
| 12.15-1.00 | Preparation of response activity for IPAC | .45m | |
| 1.00-2.15 | Lunch with Doug & Heather - Macdonald | 1.15h | |
| 2.15-2.30 | Travel | 15m | |
| 2.30-7.00 | Meeting with other managers re temp staff | 30m | |
| 7.00-8.15 | Testing of candidate | 1.15m | |
| 8.15-5.00p | General admin | 45m | |
| 5.00- | Off to golf club | | |
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